WRECKS REBUILT

WALTER KRUMWIEDE

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WRECKS REBUILT

and other

Evangelistic Sermons

By

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PREFACE

These sermons are not theoretical discourses, prepared in the quiet of the study, and preached to imaginary audiences. Every one was used several times in the course of my work in various charitable, correctional, and penal institutions and rescue missions while I served the Buffalo Inner Mission Society

They are now offered to the Church and to the general public as examples of "conservative evangelism" and as an antidote to much of the present-day emotionalism that passes as evangelistic preaching. It is also hoped that these sermons will encourage our earnest laymen and hesitant pastors to take a more active part in the work among the fallen and unfortunate. It requires no special gift of oratory to deliver the message of salvation. He who is thoroughly saved himself and devoted to the Saviour has a testimony to give, and no message or preaching is real or effective unless it comes from a saved and consecrated life. It is the simple, earnest message from such a life, and not the emotional oratory falsely called "evangelistic preaching," that reaches burdened souls and helps them to see and to accept Christ as their Saviour.

I am indebted to the Oxford University Press, American Branch, New York City, for their very kind permission to use the text of *The 1911 Bible*. In all the sermons, with the exception of the three taken from my work, *The Fivefold Pathway* (Wartburg Pub. House,

Chicago), I have employed the text of *The 1911 Bible*. To my mind this text has a happy combination lacking in all other revisions—the preservation of the spirit and simplicity of the old Authorized with the accuracy of modern scholarship.

THE AUTHOR.

Epiphany, 1922.
Rochester, N.Y.

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Wrecks Rebuilt

WRECKS REBUILT

JOHN 6:12. When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.

Life is like a long reach of stormy, rock-bound coast against which the angry waves toss and drive many a fine vessel, grinding it against the unyielding shore, until broken to pieces. Here is the wreck of a blasted hope; there lies the bleaching skeleton of the good bark, *Love;* there are scattered the splinters of an ideal, lost forever.

Yet sad and great as are the wrecks of a blasted hope, a blighted love, and a shattered ideal, they are as nothing before the saddest of all wrecks,—the wreck of a misspent life; of a life dashed to pieces by some sudden blow of satanic power, or gradually ground to fragments under the relentless driving of sin piled upon sin.

Have you ever stopped to think of the crushing sadness rolled up on others in the wake of your misspent life?—the terrible crushing burden of broken hearts; of hot tears; of bitter hours?—have you stopped to think of the crushing burden of disease and sorrow, of anguish and despair you have tossed up on the hearts of those who trusted and loved you? Would to God

you could be brought to see and to feel how awful and how far-reaching are the consequences of a misspent life, of that life of yours wrecked in the service of the devil!

But what I wish to impress upon you is not the sadness or the awfulness of your misspent life. I wish to point you to Him, Who can take the wreck of your life,—yea, every shattered fragment of its remains,—and by His mercy, grace, and love rebuild it into a new soul-bark, fit and ready, under the hand of the Great Pilot, God's Holy Spirit, to leave the coast of sin, sail, like a gallant ship-of-the-line across the sea of service and enter at last the harbor of heavenly peace; for, no matter how badly your life has been shattered by hell's power, there is One, standing among us now, Who calls to each of you and says: "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost."

Who speaks these words? It is He, Who said: "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost;"[1] it is He, Who said: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor: He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised;"[2] it is He, Who said: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;"[3] it is He, Who said: "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners unto repentance;"[4] it is He, Who said: "I have compassion on the multitude."[5] Yes, it is He, Who, sitting upon the throne

[1] Luke 19: 10. [2] Luke 4: 18. [3] Matt. 11: 28.
[4] Matt. 9: 13. [5] Mark 8: 2.

of heaven, said: "Behold, I make all things new."[6]

And what does He say now? "And Jesus . . . said . . . Gather up the fragments that remain." The fragments, the broken and apparently useless and waste bits of your life Christ calls you to give to Him! Do not begin to argue and to say: "Christ can do nothing with my life." Do not say: "My life is too far gone. It's useless for me to do what He asks. It's too late now!" To Christ has been given "all power . . . in heaven and in earth."[7] He can, therefore, take, rebuild, and keep forever that broken life of yours.

Listen! What has your life been that it is now so terrible in its sinfulness the Son of God cannot use it? Have you been a thief? one who has broken God's command: "Thou shalt not steal?"[8] Then see the power of God taking Jacob the thief, who robbed his brother of his inheritance, who, by trickery, stole the cattle of his father-in-law. Look at him and see him, Jacob the thief, under the power of God transformed into Israel, the prince of God, a father of God's chosen people, a forefather of God's only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Or look at the thief, hanging on the cross near Jesus, and hear him as he prays: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."[9] Then listen as Christ answers him: "Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."[10]

Have you taken your body, and by the awful sins of your beastly lusts, stained it and dragged God's temple into the mud of unrighteousness? Are you guilty before God of having broken His command: "Thou shalt not

[6] Rev. 21:5. [7] Matt. 28:18. [8] Exod. 20:15.
[9] Luke 23:42 [10] Luke 23:43.

commit adultery?"[11] Then see the poor woman, toiling out of the city in the heat of the noonday sun. See,—she comes to the well to draw water. By the well sits a Stranger. Why, it is Jesus! Does He condemn her? No. He, the sinless One, says to her, the sinner, "Give me to drink."[12] Now He tells her of the water of life, which drowns out the thirst of lust and evil passion. Now He reveals to her her terrible and lost condition. And now, filled by His grace, quickened by His mercy, ennobled by His divine presence, she puts down her water pot, and returns to her town, no longer the sinful wanton, but the servant of the Lord, the first missionary of Jesus the Christ; yes, not only returns to testify of Christ, but to bring the whole city to His feet and His faith. Or see,—there stands another such sinner before Christ and waits His judgment. Can you not hear the words of compassionate love as He says: "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."[13]

Have you been a drunkard? Have you broken the commandment of God, which reads: "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness;"[14] or, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess?"[15] Then see Noah, the drunkard, mocked by his own flesh and blood, when touched by God, transformed into the prophet of the Most High. Or see Lot, drunk, debauched, debasing his own daughters: and yet, when this same Lot responded to the call of God he was so transformed that God could say of him he was a "righteous man."[16]

[11] Exod. 20: 14. [12] John 4: 7. [13] John 8: 11.
[14] Rom. 13: 13. [15] Eph. 5: 18. [16] II Pet. 2: 8.

Have you been a murderer? Have you been the means, directly or indirectly, of the death of any person? Have you helped to plan the blotting out of some life? Are you guilty before God of having broken His command: "Thou shalt not kill?"[17] Then see Moses, the murderer, who slew the Egyptian and thought he could hide his sin by quickly and secretly burying the body; see him, under the power of God transformed into Moses the leader and lawgiver of God's people. Or see Saul of Tarsus, consenting to the death of Stephen, and armed with authority to slay and to kill the Christians; see this same "Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord,"[18] on the road to Damascus brought face to face with Christ and so transfigured and transformed by the Vision that he becomes Paul the Apostle. And now see him, standing before Felix the Roman governor; hear him as he reasons "of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come,"[19] until Felix, the lion of Rome, crouches in fear and trembling before God represented in the preaching of an ex-murderer.

Know, one and all, "The Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear"[20] when you cry to Him, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"[21] I care not what your sin has been. I care not how terribly Satan has shattered and broken your life. I care not how great the wreck left on the shore. This one thing I know, if you are ready and willing to hear and to obey Christ when He calls to you: "Gather up the fragments that remain;" if you

[17] Exod. 20: 13. [18] Acts 9: 1. [19] Acts 24: 25.
[20] Isa. 59: 1. [21] Luke 18: 13.

are ready and willing to cast every fragment, every sin, every unrighteousness into the hand of Christ, He will not only rebuild them into a new soul-ship, but will keep that rebuilt soul-ship through every storm of life, and guide it at last spotless into the eternal harbor of God's fair haven of rest, to be there forever in the blessedness of sins forgiven and forgotten.

Christ "is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him."[22] "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God."[23] "He was manifested to take away our sins."[24] Therefore, when in repentance and faith, you "Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world;"[25] when, in repentance and faith, you look to Christ and say: "My Lord and my God,"[26] then will you know what Paul means, when he writes, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; for when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."[27] Yea, more! "we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement."[28] The at-one-ment! The broken sinner, made one with the image of God; the restored sinner, made one with God, Whose image he stained and broke! And all through and in Christ, Who "ever liveth to make intercession for"[29] the repentant sinner.

"That nothing be lost." I have tried to show you the graciousness, the mercy, and the love of God in Christ Jesus, Who is calling to you; I have tried to

[22] Heb. 7:22. [23] I Pet. 3:18. [24] I John 3:5.
[25] John 1:29. [26] Luke 20:28. [27] Rom. 5:1, 6.
[28] Rom. 5:11. [29] Heb. 7:25.

show you that no matter how sinful your life has been if you will but listen and obey *now* the call, "Gather up the fragments that remain," Christ can rebuild your life. Now I want you to see the all-inclusiveness of this possibility.

You are now willing to grant that Christ can call the sinner; yes, you will go a step further and admit that He does call sinners to new lives of righteousness and peace. You are ready to admit the possibility, but you will not yet admit the probability of Christ's power in and for your life. Therefore, I ask you to look at the closing words of Christ's command: "That nothing be lost." Christ says: "Nothing . . . lost." There is not only the possibility, there is also the probability which you still doubt. I am not going to ask you to take my word for the truth of this promise of Christ. I am going to let Christ speak for Himself. Listen! He says: "The Son of man is come to save that which was lost."[30] He says: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."[31] He says: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."[32] He says: "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."[33] He says: "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."[34]

Cannot your spirit now say, "Christ said it; I believe it; that settles it!" Amen.

[30] Matt. 18: 11. [31] John 3: 16. [32] John 4: 14.
[33] John 6: 37. [34] John 10: 9.

CHRIST, THE END FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

ROM. 10:4. For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

As we study the workings of God one thing is driven home to us above everything else, i.e., that every act of God is the expression of divine purpose. God never does anything, God never ordains anything, God never wills anything unless He has some definite aim to accomplish. The great and underlying purpose of God's working is evidently designed to further the welfare of mankind. Therefore, every act of God is an expression of His mercy and grace. For example: when God called Abraham and said to him: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee;"[1] it was for the furtherance of a great divine mercy-plan,— "thou shalt be a blessing . . . and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."[2] When Joseph was betrayed by his brothers and sold into slavery, the jealousy and hatred, which prompted the deed, missed their mark. Why? Because God had planned to open a way through Joseph by which the children of Israel might be brought into Egypt, the only civilized country of the day, and there learn those arts and crafts of war, industry, and commerce, which would fit them to become the conquerors and inheritors of the Promised Land.

[1] Gen. 12:1. [2] Gen. 12:3.

God's holy purposes and His great mercy and grace are shown also in the relation of Christ to the Divine Will as found in the Law of God. It is easy for us to see a revelation of grace and mercy in Christ's many gracious and merciful acts, which He sums up in His reply to the imprisoned John: "Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them."[3] These are gracious and merciful deeds, revealing to us the will and love of God in Christ Jesus for and toward the sinner.

Yet, this same truth is found in Christ's relation to the Law of God. Yes, even more so, for while the terrible ills and bodily afflictions, which Christ cured, affected only the earthly, bodily existence of these poor souls, the Law, as the expression of God's holy and eternal justice, affects the entire destiny of body and soul, not only for time and this world, but also for eternity and the world to come. Therefore, any effect Christ's relation to the Law produces in the soul's relation to God is of first importance and one which is evidently full of God's purpose and a key to the opening up of His mercy and grace.

It is not by chance, therefore, but by a direct and determined revelation of the Spirit of God that Paul writes to the Roman Christians, and through them by the same Spirit to every sinning soul, earnestly and prayerfully seeking the Way, the Truth, and the Life, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth."

[3] Matt. 11:4, 5.

Let us consider the natural divisions of this passage:

1. Christ the End of the Law;
2. Christ the End for Righteousness;
3. Christ the End for Righteousness to Everyone that Believeth.

The end of the Law in Christ is found, first, in that the Law is the force or power of God, acting on the sin-stained, sin-stricken conscience, which drives the sinner to Christ. The Holy Spirit says that the Law is "our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ."[4] Now the purpose of a schoolmaster is to teach, to replace ignorance with knowledge. As he does this he leads the pupil from a lower to a constantly ascending grade until the point of the completed course is reached. So it is with the Law. By teaching the sinner the nature of sin and its eternal effects upon the immortal soul, it leads him to a higher knowledge of his own terrible and lost condition, his helplessness in sin, and his utter inability to save himself from the power and consequences of his sin.

Let us see how this comes to pass. Paul writes, "By the law is the knowledge of sin."[5] This thought he developes thus, "I had not known sin, but by the law, for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet."[6] Again he writes, "But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful."[7] So then, the Law of God, revealing the true nature of sin, convinces the soul that it is sinful in God's sight and that as long as this sinful

[4] Gal. 3:24. [5] Rom. 3:20. [6] Rom. 7:7.
[7] Rom. 7:13.

condition remains untouched by some power outside the Law the sinner is really dead in the sight of God.

Could the Law reveal any more awful condition? Dead in the sight of God! Dead! finding no place in His divine mercy; dead! no place in His infinite compassion; dead! no place in His quickening power. But place in His eternal justice; place in His stinging judgment; place in His consuming wrath; place in His abiding condemnation. Place in hell; but no place in His kingdom of love and life! For the soul which sins feasts on the Law's kiss of death. If your heart has not yet felt and answered the call of Christ to repentance, faith, and service, you are still under the Law. And the Law's sweetest message to you is this, "The wages of sin is death."[8]

In the second place, Christ is the End of the Law because He alone has completely fulfilled every demand of God's righteousness as this is revealed to us in the Law. Christ said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill."[9] Thus He alone could give the supreme defy to all ages as He said: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?"[10] Having fulfilled every command and demand of the Law in His sinless, perfect life, Christ became the End of the Law.

The supreme claim of Christ to an absolute fulfillment of God's will is substantiated by a long line of witnesses reaching from the lowest depths of hell to the crowning heights of heaven. In the synagogue at Capernaum the "unclean devil," speaking through the mouth of the man, cries out: "Let us alone; what have

[8] Rom. 6:23. [9] Matt. 5:17. [10] John 8:46.

we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God."[11] The three great sinners, Judas, Pilate, and the crucified thief, what is their testimony? Filled with remorse for his selling of Jesus, Judas "brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, . . . I have betrayed the innocent blood."[12] After his close and searching examination of Jesus, Pilate went out and "said to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man."[13] And the thief on the cross, as he rebuked his companion in crime for his blasphemy against Jesus, said: "This man hath done nothing amiss."[14]

The saints, who lived with Christ, who traveled with Him up and down the whole length and breadth of the Holy Land, who talked with Him, ate with Him, slept with Him, day in and day out for three years, what say they? Is their testimony summed up in the old proverb, "Familiarity breeds contempt?" Listen—in his letter "to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia," Peter writes as follows, "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow in his steps: who did no sin."[15] John, the beloved Apostle, who leaned on Jesus' breast and heard the heart throbs of the divine Son of God, tells of Jesus that "He was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin."[16]

And then, from high above all, testifying from the throne of heaven, comes the voice of the Father, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."[17]

[11] Luke 4:34. [12] Matt. 27:3, 4. [13] Luke 23:4. [14] Luke 23:41.
[15] I Pet. 2:21, 22. [16] I John 3:5. [17] Matt. 3:17.

Now what is the spiritual value of this for you? God gives you in Jesus Christ the perfect Man in order that you may have a pattern or living example for your own life. Christ says: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me."[18] So Paul writes, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."[19] Peter tells us of "Christ . . . leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps."[20]

Have you ever watched a little child try to draw pictures? When it has no pattern to follow how queer are its drawings. But give the child a simple picture to copy, or better still let it trace a picture, and how different the result, how much nearer to an exact reproduction the imperfect powers of the child produce. So it is in your spiritual life. In Christ Jesus the heavenly Father has given you an exact pattern of the holy life He demands of you. If you lay your sinful life over the Christ-pattern, and by God's Holy Spirit copy and trace that Pattern in your daily life and conduct, you will soon begin to find yourself growing "in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."[21] And in that last great day of God's judgment, when you will have to give an account of the deeds done in the flesh, you will not have to stand before Him, ashamed and condemned by the silent testimony of the deeds which have followed you.

Lastly Christ is the end of the Law because He has destroyed its death-dealing power over everyone who believes in Him. In his letter to the Colossians, chapter two, verse four, Paul tells us how Christ blotted "out the handwriting of the ordinances that was against

[18] Matt. 11:29. [19] Phil. 2:5. [20] I Pet. 2:21. [21] Luke 2:52.

us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."

In ancient times people did not have paper to write letters on as we have today, but wrote on tablets of wax, which they sent by private messengers or slaves. The person receiving this letter written on wax would often soften the surface of the tablet just received, knead, scrape and reroll it until the friend's message was entirely blotted out, and then, on the same tablet, he would write and send back an answer. The Law writes on the sinner's heart the message of God's righteous wrath and condemnation. This message is *Death to the sinner*. The Holy Spirit takes the sinner's heart, kneads it with the Law's condemning power, scrapes it with the Law's tormenting touch in the conscience, and rolls it with the Law's overwhelming demands for righteousness until the sinning soul is driven in repentance to the foot of the Cross where the precious blood of the Crucified blots out every trace of the old message of condemnation, and then, on the renewed surface of the old heart-tablet, the Holy Spirit writes the great and glorious message, the message prompted by God's mercy and grace and called forth by the repentant sinner's faith, i.e., "the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."[22]

Let us now look on Christ as the end of the Law for Righteousness.

The sinner needs a spiritual guide. He cannot know the will of God unless that will is revealed to him. The Law is this needed revelation of God's will given to the sinner to show him the righteousness heaven demands.

[22] Rom. 6:23.

This is plainly seen in the 19th Psalm, verses 7-11, especially verse 7, which reads, "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." More accurately translated this verse would read, "The doctrine of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul." The Law is God's doctrine or teaching about the perfection He requires of all. As you have already seen this perfection is made yours as the Law drives you to Christ and as Christ fulfills the Law in your place, giving you a perfect example of purity for you to copy. And as this perfection is made yours by Christ, it is applied for your benefit through the blood of the Cross blotting out the handwriting against you and washing you free from your sin. Thus Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness, and your soul redeemed by Him, is refilled, not with the letter, but with the spirit of the old Law, so that you have again that old fellowship of love, the essence of which is Christ's righteousness, finding place in your life, as Paul says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."[23]

Lastly we ask: "Who are the beneficiaries of Christ the end for Righteousness?" According to God's plan Christ and His righteousness are for everyone. No one

[23] Rom. 8: 1-4.

need be excluded in time or eternity from the righteousness founded by Christ. Christ says: "The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."[24] Again He says: "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."[25] And yet again He says: "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world."[26]

The call of God in Christ Jesus and the outreach of His righteousness are worldwide and they are for everyone. Why then are not all benefitted and saved by His salvation? Because all will not hear the call of Christ and come to Him that they may be given this salvation. The lament of Christ over His holy city, Jerusalem, is as true today in its spiritual application as when He uttered those memorable words,—"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children, together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."[27]

Here is the secret: "How often would I . . . . and ye would not." Christ calls, man will not hear. Man calls, Christ hears not. "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved."[28]

[24] Luke 9:56. [25] John 3:17. [26] John 12:47.
[27] Matt. 23:37, 38. [28] John 3:19, 20.

"Ye will not come, to me, that ye might have life."[29]

Because men's evil nature and unrighteous deeds so control their spiritual destiny that they will not come to Christ according to God's universal plan, God has limited His salvation and gives it only to those who will believe on His Son. Thus Christ says "Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole."[30] Arise, go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole."[31] "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."[32] "I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"[33]

O thou sin-stricken and sin-laden soul "be not faithless, but believing."[34] "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth,"[35] for "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life."[36] Amen.

[29] John 5:40. [30] Mark 10:52. [31] Luke 17:19.
[32] Luke 7:50. [33] John 11:25, 26. [34] John 20:27.
[35] Rom. 10:4. [36] John 3:16.

SIN DESCRIBED AND DEFEATED

GAL. 5 : 1. Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

There are in this world just two classes of people, those who are lost and those who are saved. Or, to put it otherwise, the world is made up of lost sinners and redeemed sinners. Therefore, to whichever class you belong you are still a sinner and must need the continued presentation and application of God's Holy Word. The message, which I bring to you now, is intended for all sinners, redeemed or lost, that those of you, who are firm in the faith may give heed to the dangers constantly surrounding and threatening your spiritual existence, and that those of you, who have not surrendered to Christ, may be shown the true nature of the sin in which you are living, its eternal consequences for the soul, and the way to escape the blighting effect of service for the devil.

The words of Paul give us first, a threefold definition or description of sin. He says: "Be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." According to these words of the Holy Spirit sin is an entanglement, a yoke, and a bondage.

Perhaps you have watched a spider spinning his web. First he crawls out on some twig or beam. Then he begins to spin a long, silken thread barely visible to the naked eye. As this thread gets longer and longer it is caught by the breeze, blown from side to side, catch-

ing at last on some twig, where it holds fast, twining itself with an unbreakable hold. As soon as this first thread has caught hold somewhere, the spider sets to work spinning another fine, silken cord, which in turn finds a hold on some other twig. And so he goes on working, spinning one thread after another, each weak in itself and barely visible, each catching and holding fast somewhere, until a firm foundation has been laid for the weaving of the body of the web.

The foundation laid, the spider runs down one of the threads and begins the weaving of the web. In and out, around and around he goes, never skipping a single foundation thread, never missing a connecting link until his work is done. The web finished, the spider hides behind some leaf, or in some crack, and patiently waits the coming of his victim.

Now along comes a heedless bug, joyously winging his flight, supremely happy in the enjoyment of God's sunlight. Suddenly he feels his flight brought to a halt. His wings begin to stick to his body and his legs are grasped by a something he cannot shake off. The more he struggles, the more tightly he is held. He is in the entangling web! His struggles are telegraphed along the web's meshes to the lurking spider, which suddenly darts out of his hiding place, rushes toward his victim, and stinging the poor bug with his sharp dart, injects into him a death-spreading poison. The bug's efforts to escape become weaker and weaker as the poison spreads through his body. He breaks a strand here, and a thread there, in his death agony; but all in vain; he falls a prey to his own heedlessness and the spider's cunning web and poisonous power. Then

the spider wraps his victim in a silken shroud and carries him away for a feast.

And that is sin! The devil-spider throws out into your soul a little, soft, silken habit, an almost invisible thread of sin. Tossed here and there by the wind of his cunning, the little sin finds lodgment in your life and gives the devil his first hold on your soul. From this first sin he throws out a second, and a third thread, and then thread after thread until the framework of his web is fixed in your body, mind, and soul. Then he begins to spin his web of iniquity in your life. This done he hides himself behind the leaf of excuse, or in the crack of self-righteousness, until you, like the heedless bug, hurl yourself against the hidden web. And then, struggle as you will, break a sin here and a sin there as you may, your momentary victory over some sin, your passing triumph over some habit of hell's forming, each struggle, each breaking away, each victory and triumph but bind you more securely in the web, and when your strength begins to ebb, and you can barely breathe, the devil will fill your spirit with his hellish poison till your doom is sealed. Once his victim, you are carried away by the devil that he may feast on you for ever and ever.

Again, says Paul, sin is a yoke. Perhaps some of you have lived in the country and know from personal experience what a yoke is and for what it is used. A double bow of hard wood, strong, unbreakable, used to bind together the oxen which do the heavy work about the farm.

I remember as a boy seeing a beautiful yoke of oxen owned by my grandfather. Held together in spite of

themselves by the wooden yoke about their necks, they drew the stone-boat, and plowed the heavy clay meadows, harrowed the stony hill-lands, or hauled the heavy, tricky logs in winter. Their life, from one end of the year to the other, was one round of the heaviest kind of toil, always under the most trying circumstances.

Sometimes one of the oxen would become vicious and try to break away from the yoke that bound him to his companion-in-toil. How he would pull and strain and kick in his battle for freedom from the yoke and its burden of toil. But all in vain! The yoke would not give or break, the load dragged him back, his companion pulled against him, his master goaded him, till, exhausted by his useless rebellion, he would fall, panting to the ground, only to rise again to do his share of the daily farm labor.

And that is sin! An unyielding yoke, which binds you to hell, and makes you pull hell's loads and do hell's work. O, what a load that is! what a work that is! how your heart has rebelled against it! how you have struggled, and strained, and kicked against its galling presence! But did you not find, in spite of every struggle, the yoke still about your soul, the burden of sin still attached to your life? Did you not find, time and again, that exhausted as you were by your struggles against your hell-master and his lashing of your spirit because of your rebellion against him, you had to rise and to pull again that terrible burden of sin and carry again that galling yoke of iniquity?

I recall the end of one of my grandfather's yoke of oxen. Down the middle of the farm ran a lane, which was cut in two by a narrow wooden bridge spanning a

stream that traversed the farm. One day one of the oxen, which was considerably larger and much more powerful than his yokefellow, started to run away. For a few minutes the smaller ox hung back and checked the mad flight of the larger and stronger ox. But it was only for a few minutes. Soon the superior weight and strength of the other ox began to tell. His panic of fear and spirit of rebellion were caught by the other. Then both raced wildly down the lane toward the narrow bridge. They reach the bridge. The smaller ox is crowded to the edge; he loses his footing, but somehow struggles back to the bridge; then the larger ox sways to the other edge, hangs for a moment above the stream, and suddenly lunges into the water carrying his weaker companion with him. Once in the water the larger ox treads the smaller down, breaking bone after bone, crushing out his life, and by the time help comes the weaker companion is dead, bruised, crushed, drowned by his yokefellow.

And that is sin! The yoke, which so binds you to the devil, that when he starts his mad career toward destruction you must go with him whether you will or no, because you are the weaker of the two. You reach some great crisis in your life, some supreme temptation, you struggle back to safety for a moment, but the unbroken yoke leaves you in Satan's power and at his mercy, so he hurls you to the other side of the bridge, and pulls you off into the stream where he tramples, crushes, and drowns you for all eternity.

Lastly, Paul says that sin is bondage. Bondage is slavery. We like to persuade ourselves that we are freemen and freewomen, in slavery to no one, masters

of our own destinies. Would that this were true! But it is not, as is proved by the marks and the scars of sin, so visible on many weary faces here tonight. You, who bear these marks and scars, you, in whose eyes is that haunted look; you, whose body droops with weariness; you, on whose face is written the handwriting of a useless battle, I ask you: "Have you marked and scarred yourself? Have you graven that haunted, weary, hopeless expression on your own face and in your own body?" I challenge you, is this your own, willing work? If it is I can but say that you are mad or fools so to mark and scar and burden your life! No, these are not your willing work, but the marks of hell's irons about your life, the proofs that in sin you are in slavery, a slavery which scars deeply and marks surely.

Such is sin,—a web of entanglement, a yoke of toil and destruction, a bondage, which marks and mars.

But there is another side to the divine truth. Not only is Paul permitted to describe sin for us, but he is also given power to point us to the way of sin's defeat. And this is the way,—Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.

There is a liberty possible for every one; a liberty from sin's death-dealing rule; a liberty to live the fullest life unhampered by the power of hell. The Psalmist sings: "I will walk at liberty; for I seek thy precepts."[1] The evangelical prophet announces: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of prison to them that

[1] Ps. 119: 45.

are bound."[2] The Apostle tells about "the glorious liberty of the children of God,"[3] bids all know that we "have been called to liberty,"[4] and testifies that "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."[5]

The one grand purpose of Christ's coming into the world was that all, every one, could have life, even as He says: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."[6] Can you imagine such a life where there is no liberty? Can the plant grow straight and vigorously if it is crushed to the ground by some weight? or can the seed pierce the ground and reach up to God's sunlight and drink in His refreshing dew if it cannot penetrate the hard crust that shuts in its life powers? Neither can your soul rise above things which are mean, low, and sinful to a life which is filled with things worth while unless you taste the liberty of Christ. This liberty alone, and only this liberty can enable you to shake yourself free from the bondage of sin.

There is a liberty for you if you will have it. You cannot buy it; you cannot earn it; no one can leave it or give it to you. It is a free gift, a token of divine mercy given freely and lovingly to one and only one class of persons, the repentant, believing sinners.

You must hear the call of Christ, Who pleads with you now to accept Him as your Lord, your God, and your Saviour. You must heed the pleadings of the Good Shepherd, Who would free you and take you to His heart to give you peace, power, and purpose in life. You must hold fast to Him, Who is the only Way

[2] Isa. 61 : 1. [3] Rom. 8 : 21. [4] Gal. 5 : 13.
[5] II Cor. 3 : 17. [6] John 10 : 10.

to the Father, the Truth that sets you free, the Life which is the life of all men, the Light which shines along your path to keep you from stumbling and falling again under the power of the old life of sin.

You know you want to be free, now, this very night. You know you want to leave here feeling that you have lost forever that terrible weight which has so long crushed your heart, burdened your conscience, and marred your life; free from the poverty of body and soul; free to breathe God's air without fearing a living soul, for "who is he that will harm you, if ye become followers of that which is good?"[7] Will you not come? Will you not take of this liberty of Christ's and standing fast in His power be free forever in this world and in that to come from that entangling yoke of bondage which now is making your life a hell?

[7] I Pet. 3:13.

THE CRY THAT SAVES

PSALM 51: 1-4, 7-12. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin *is* ever before me.

Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done *this* evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, *and* be clear when thou judgest.

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Make me to hear joy and gladness: *that* the bones *which* thou hast broken may rejoice.

Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.

Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me *with thy* free Spirit.

It is a sad truth of human history that men must pass through the hard school of experience. The loving parent may tell the child that fire burns, but until the child has experienced this fact for himself he will play about the dangerous place. This sad truth finds its expression in our spiritual life as well. God said to Adam: "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."[1] Then one day the temptation to enter the school of experience came and

[1] Gen. 2: 16, 17.

Satan said: "Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."[2] So Adam and Eve entered through the gate of temptation and enrolled themselves in a hard and bitter school, under a stern and unrelenting teacher, and the first lesson they learned was the meaning of God's curse against and punishment for sin. And this is the lesson. "Because thou hast . . . eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return . . . So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."[3]

Many years after Adam had passed through the bitter school of experience a young shepherd lad was called by the prophet of God to lead the children of Israel to victory and service. He heard and heeded the call, entered the court of King Saul, and began his training for leadership. The nights of meditation under the great dome of God's temple of out-of-doors followed him through the long training under the moody and evil Saul and saved the young David from every temptation. At last Saul was called to the bar of divine justice and David ascended the throne of God's chosen

[2] Gen. 3:4, 5. [3] Gen. 3:17-24, *passim.*

people. With power and wealth, came many severe temptations. Again the young king rose triumphant over Satan and followed after the will of God, until one day the devil found David's weak spot and in an unguarded moment the king became a slave to sin and entered the hard school of experience.

Let me tell you the story, briefly,—David had among his faithful subjects one Uriah, who had as his wife a most beautiful woman. One evening, after David had returned weary from directing his army against the enemy, he went to the roof of the palace to rest. As he "walked upon the roof of the king's house,"[4] his eyes fell upon the wife of Uriah, "and the woman was very beautiful to look upon."[5] As he gazed his heart fell before the attack of Satan and David lusted after Uriah's wife. Lust conquered him. Friendship to Uriah he cast aside. God's commandment, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife,"[6] he broke, while he scorned the Law, which says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery."[7] So he began to scheme how he might get possession of his neighbor's wife. Entering the school of Satan, David learns the lesson only too well. He sends to Joab, the captain of his army, and secretly instructs him, saying, "Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him that he may be smitten, and die."[8] The king's command is obeyed and Uriah is killed in battle. To his sin David adds still more iniquity in breaking the Commandment, "Thou shalt not kill."[9] Uriah out of the way, the rest is simple, and David secures the desire of his passion, for "when

[4] II Sam. 11:2. [5] II Sam. 11:2. [6] Exod. 20:17.
[7] Exod. 20:14. [8] II Sam. 11:15. [9] Exod. 20:13.

the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned her husband. And when the mourning was past, David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son."[10]

So far so good. Uriah is out the way, David has his heart's desire. But! Yes, that little "but" comes in again. But,—David has forgotten that

> When man in sin possesses,
> Then God in love distresses.

He has forgotten that great divinely given truth,—"Be sure your sin will find you out."[11] Thus the story goes on. "But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord. And the Lord sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up; and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveler unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

"And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this shall surely die; and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity."[12]

[10] II Sam. 11:27. [11] Num. 32:23. [12] II Sam. 11:27-12:6.

Now listen, listen well, every one of you, to the hard, bitter, unsparing lesson David learned in the hard, bitter, unsparing school of experience. Listen! "And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; and I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me. . . . Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house. . . . For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun."[13]

A terrible history with a terrible end! A hard lesson in the school of experience! But given to you now for a purpose; recounted at some length, and almost entirely in God's own way and words that you might appreciate and profit by the lessons which David gives us in that remarkable Psalm, the 51st, written immediately after his repentant, sinful soul had been spared as he cried out in anguish unto Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord."[14] To you now, David cries, cries with the saving knowledge gained from his own bitter experience in the school of Satan, gained at so great a cost,

[13] II Sam. 12:7-12, *passim.* [14] II Sam. 12:13.

the sword and evil upon his own loved ones, gained that you and I may now profit by his experience, turn from our lusts and sinning, and live again. Hear then the cry that saves.

HAVE MERCY UPON ME, O GOD, ACCORDING TO THY LOVING KINDNESS; ACCORDING UNTO THE MULTITUDE OF THY TENDER MERCIES BLOT OUT MY TRANSGRESSIONS. WASH ME THOROUGHLY FROM MINE INIQUITY, AND CLEANSE ME FROM MY SIN. FOR I ACKNOWLEDGE MY TRANSGRESSIONS: AND MY SIN IS EVER BEFORE ME. AGAINST THEE, THEE ONLY, HAVE I SINNED, AND DONE THIS EVIL IN THY SIGHT: THAT THOU MIGHTEST BE JUSTIFIED WHEN THOU SPEAKEST, AND BE CLEAR WHEN THOU JUDGEST.

PURGE ME WITH HYSSOP, AND I SHALL BE CLEAN; WASH ME, AND I SHALL BE WHITER THAN SNOW. MAKE ME TO HEAR JOY AND GLADNESS; THAT THE BONES WHICH THOU HAST BROKEN MAY REJOICE. HIDE THY FACE FROM MY SINS, AND BLOT OUT ALL MINE INIQUITIES. CREATE IN ME A CEAN HEART, O GOD; AND RENEW A RIGHT SPIRIT WITHIN ME. CAST ME NOT AWAY FROM THY PRESENCE; AND TAKE NOT THY HOLY SPIRIT FROM ME. RESTORE UNTO ME THE JOY OF THY SALVATION; AND UPHOLD ME WITH THY FREE SPIRIT.

The first great saving truth which comes to you from this anguished cry of David is this,—Sin is a matter of personal responsibility; sin is something in your life which you cannot shift to someone else. This is clearly

indicated by the development that David gives to Nathan's accusation. Nathan says: "Thou art the man." David says, "I have sinned." In the part of this Psalm, used for our text, the personal pronoun "I" occurs no less than twenty-four times in one form or other, while the personal pronoun "Thee" occurs fourteen times. In the entire Psalm of but nineteen verses, the pronoun "I," in its various forms, occurs thirty-five times, and "Thee" in its various forms, just twenty-nine times. Why this frequent use of *I, my, mine, me;* of *Thee, thou, thine, thy?* For just one reason,—that you may come to realize and appreciate the personal responsibility for your life of sin.

The sinner likes to shift the blame and the consequences of his sin. How well I know this; how well you know this. I meet a man in some hospital ward and his excuse is: "My friends led me astray." I find a man behind prison bars and he pleads as his spiritual alibi: "My boss was a crook." And so on. Your conscience begins to condemn you and you blame Society; your heart speaks to condemn you and you blame the small wage you received and offer this as an excuse for robbing your employer or for your life of shameful sin.

But you cannot shift the burden or escape the consequences of your life of sin in this way. "Thou art the man." You, your own individual personal self. Just simply you are the one who is the sinner and no one else. Society, small wage, friends, parents, employer, rotten politics, unfaithful police officers, an unjust penal system, all these and many other things may have invited you to sin and made it easy for you to sin, but

you did not have to sin unless you wanted to. "Thou art the man." You had to make the choice. "Thou art the man." You had to take that first drink. "Thou art the man." You had to steal that money. "Thou art the man." You! You! and only you! "And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned." "And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner."[15]

The second truth that comes from this cry of David is this,—every sin is against God. Many a sinner thinks God is not personally interested in his sin. He thinks God lets the act of sin influence only the one sinned against. But sin rises higher than its mere human and moral influences. Every sin you commit is not simply against yourself, or against another, it is a direct sin against God. David says to Nathan: "I have sinned against God." To God he says: "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." Who gave the law you broke when you used your body for those vile and filthy practices? Who gave the law you broke when you became a thief? Who gave the law you broke when in a drunken frenzy you abused your wife and family? Was it the State, or Society, or what? It was God, and only God, Who founded the law against which you rebelled and for which rebellion you are now suffering the loss of your personal liberty. This is what God's Holy Book says: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Come up to me in the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou

[15] Luke 18: 13.

mayest teach them."[16] Again God's Book says: "Thou shalt not revile the judges, nor curse the ruler of thy people."[17] When Paul is moved by the Spirit of God he writes, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves condemnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. . . . For he is the minister of God to thee . . . he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."[18]

David thought his sin had ended with the home he wrecked, the life he destroyed, and the purity he marred. But God thought otherwise and sent Nathan to say: "Thou art the man." So David learned another hard lesson, namely, that every sin in thought, word, or deed, is a sin directed against God's will and holy laws and therefore directed against God. "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned."

As soon as David came to realize that he was personally responsible for his sin and that he had sinned directly against God, his heart was filled with anguish and repentance. He felt not only how terrible a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God, but also how terrible a thing it is to fall out of the hands of the living God and through sin against Him merit His just wrath against sin. How shall he escape, how shall the old union with his God be re-established, how shall he be forgiven? This is the great question troubling

[16] Exod. 24: 12. [17] Exod. 22: 28. [18] Rom. 13: 1-4, *passim.*

David's soul. David has pronounced his own doom,—"As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die." His soul cries out: "Have mercy upon me, O God." Yes, have mercy, is the sinner's plea! But how can the sinner lay hold on this mercy?

God is merciful to David and leads him to see that no sin can be forgiven until the first step is taken. If you would feel the mercy of God you must say with David: "I acknowledge my transgressions." Where there is no confession of sin to God, no acknowledgment of rebellion against Him, and Him alone, there is no room for mercy. As soon as David said: "I have sinned against the Lord;" the reply came back straight from the throne of God: "The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die."[19] The Law of God says: "And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing."[20] God's promise in the Law is, "If they shall confess their iniquity . . . with their trespass which they trespassed against me . . . then will I remember my covenant . . ."[21] In the 32nd Psalm David says: "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." The beloved Apostle, who leaned on Jesus' breast and felt the beating of that merciful heart, writes, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."[22] Unless you acknowledge before God that you have sinned against him, unless you make

[19] II Sam. 12:13. [20] Lev. 5:5. [21] Lev. 26:40-42, *passim*.
[22] I John 1:9.

humble confession at the foot of the Cross, you can expect no mercy from Him Who died for your sins, or from the Father Who sent His Son to give His life for you.

With the recognition of sin as a personal responsibility against a personal God and a frank, full, and repentant confession to God of sin, come the gift of God's cleansing, the forgiveness of sins, and the power to begin life anew.

David prays for God to purge, to wash, to cleanse, to create a clean heart in him. How great must be the dirt of sin, the filthiness of unrighteousness when the sinner feels it necessary to use so many different words to describe what his sinning soul needs of God. No wonder the servant of God is compelled to confess: "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags."[23] And why is the linen of your righteousness so unclean? Because your heart has not kept its hold on God. "Create in me a clean heart," prays David. A clean heart. Christ says: "That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these things come from within, and defile the man."[24] Yes, that old, wicked, lurking place of rebellion against God, that heart, which "deviseth wicked imaginations,"[25] that heart, which "is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,"[26] must be purged, washed, cleansed,

[23] Isa 64:6. [24] Mark 7:20-23. [25] Prov. 6:18.
[26] Jer. 17:9.

re-created by the power of God before the new life can be lived.

Who may call himself a child of God, a follower of the Son of God? Only he in whom God has created a clean heart. "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart."[27] "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God."[28] Give your heart to God now; let Him bathe it in the precious blood of His Son, Jesus Christ; let Him make of you a new creation in this same Jesus, Who loved you, and gave Himself for you, that you might know that there is forgiveness with God and a new righteousness in the Spirit.

And now, what comes with the new heart, the clean heart, the re-created heart? The Psalmist tells us,— "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation: and uphold me with thy free spirit." With the pardon and the cleansing come joy and constancy. Happiness and faithfulness in the time of testing, trial, and temptation, these are the supreme gifts, which God gives you with that re-created heart. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint."[29] "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is fulfilled in weakness. Most gladly therefore," says Paul, "will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."[30] "Whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he."[31] "Happy is the man that feareth alway."[32] "The

[27] Ps. 24:3. [28] Matt. 5:8. [29] Isa. 40:31.
[30] II Cor. 12:9. [31] Prov. 16:20. [32] Prov. 28:14.

meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel."[33] "My servants shall sing for joy of heart."[34] "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."[35] "Your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."[36]

These are the words and promises of Almighty God. How they should invite you to give Him a trial in your life! How they should call you to cast yourself at the foot of the Cross! What is there in your sin that gives you such hope as these promises of God? What is there in your present life that gives you any right to think of the time when you will find peace for your soul, strength for your spirit, and joy and constancy for your heart? You know there is no such hope, no such expectancy for you outside of Christ, the saving, keeping, blessing Son of God. Why, then, will you hesitate longer to accept Him?

Jesus, Thy words alone impart
  Eternal life: on these I live;
Here sweeter comforts cheer my heart,
  Than all the powers of nature give.
Here let my constant feet abide;
  Thou art the true, the living Way;
Let Thy good Spirit be my guide
  To the bright realms of endless day.
The various forms that men devise,
  To shake my faith with treacherous art,
I scorn as vanity and lies,
  And bind Thy Gospel to my heart.

[33] Isa. 29: 19. [34] Isa. 65: 14. [35] John 15: 11.
[36] John 16: 22.

THE PATHWAY OF SUFFERING*

Isa. 53 : 4-6. ¶Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

The verses of our text bring before us very clearly the vicarious suffering of Christ Jesus,—a truth of Scripture not palatable to the modern spirit of self-exaltation and the modern theory of salvation by education and intellectualism.

The words of the Prophet show a gradation of suffering on the part of the Servant of Jehovah, a gradation which culminates in and is summarized by the words, "and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." This passage gives us the clew to our present meditation and leads us to the Pathway of Suffering (1) the Revealer of God; (2) the Discloser of Sin; (3) the Healer of Iniquity.

1. The Pathway of Suffering as the Revealer of God.

Among the peoples of the earth three general views have prevailed as the expression of their religious aspirations. Among the heathen, savage tribes of the

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jungle, the conviction is that their gods are angry with them, that they must be appeased, and that to secure their favor and stem the flood of their anger not only worship but also sacrifice must be made. To these poor people their gods are a horde of wrathful, vengeful beings lying in wait to injure and slay as opportunity affords. Thus it often happens that while in the frenzy of religious excitement and out of anxiety these savage people cast their very flesh and blood, their tender infants, into raging mountain torrents or into blazing fires, and leave them in the depths of the forest as a sacrifice to pacify and placate a wrathful god.

Another view is found among the nations of classic culture, as the Greeks and the Romans. Here human sacrifice plays no role, and the gods are no longer wrathful, but merely capricious. These gods have all the failings of the people themselves. They are not all-wise, all-present, all-powerful, but live on Mt. Olympus, where they hold high feast and holiday, eating, drinking, quarreling, sleeping, etc., even as mortals.

These gods take some share in the doings of their worshipers, but in so doing they pick out certain favorites, some popular hero of the day, some wise man of the nation, and aid him to the neglect of the common people as a whole. The god Mars selects the crafty leader of some robber band and assists him in his exploits; Jupiter, the king of the gods, sees some beautiful maiden, and burning with desire for her, steals her away and adds her to his ever-increasing harem; Venus is jealous of the beauty of a sister goddess, and by bribing Paris with the promise of the most beautiful woman in the world for a wife, she both wins the

crown of beauty and causes the destruction of Troy.

The third conception of God is the child of rationalism. The highest it can ever rise in its reach after truth is to a realization of the *might* of God. Rationalism has never gone beyond God as the Creator, with a dim view of the orderliness of God. It can see and fathom that "the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork."[1] It may even have a vague longing "That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him."[2] But alas the words of Job are only too true,—"Canst thou by searching find out God?"[3] And so it happens that the rationalist can rise no higher in his religious aspirations than to God as the absentee Creator.

In sharp contrast to these views, coming from man's vain reachings of reason and the innate impulse to worship a Higher Being, stands the revelation of God we have in the sufferings of Christ. In the first place we see that our God is not One who stands aloof and is wrathful because we have sinned against Him. Our God is that God who comes to us in love and mercy *in spite of* our sinning against Him! What an exalted view of God! What a picture of love, proof against every injury and insult of sin! The insulted and injured One draws near to the insulter and injurer, not with wrath to destroy, but with love to save! Such a view of God could never have come to us from the mind of man. It must be the result of revelation, and that of the highest kind, even the sending of the very Son of God to us.

And the sending of the Son shows us another differ-

[1] Ps. 19: 1. [2] Acts 27: 17. [3] Job 11: 17.

ence between the God of revelation and the gods of reason. Not only does the God of revelation come, but He gives the sacrifice which is necessary to appease His injured justice and insulted holiness. We do not have to give to Him, but He gives to us that sacrifice that shall meet and satisfy all the requirements of His justice and His holiness.

Then look at the nature of this sacrificial gift. What is it? a gift of the fruits of the earth? a gift of gold? a child of ours? No, it is none of these. It is His own, His only-begotten Son, the very apple of His eye. How sublime an expression of love!

Thus the Pathway of Suffering reveals as the true God, the God Who seeks to save those who are lost through their sinning against Him, the God, Who seeks no sacrifice from us, but Who gives the sacrifice, even His only-begotten Son. What a picture of mercy, grace, and love! A picture that human reason and the reachings of man in religious aspirations sought for in vain for centuries, and which comes to us only through the revealing power of Christ's sufferings.

Yet, how often, we, the very ones for whom Christ suffered, the very ones to whom God so graciously and lovingly reveals Himself to save us from ourselves and the consequences of our follies, yet how often we turn our backs upon Him Who loves us, only to re-crucify Him with the hardness of our heart. Ah! it ought not to be so. And it would not be so if we would come to God *daily* in the reading of His Word and in prayer.

2. The Pathway of Suffering as the Discloser of Sin.

Christ's sufferings reveal to us not only the being and nature of God, but also the being and nature of sin. The sufferings of Christ disclose sin to us first of all as a *reality*. The existence of sin is a fact. Human reason, in its exaltation of self, seeks to explain away the reality of sin. Christian Science is a fine example of this inherent trait of human reason to deny sin. Mrs. Eddy says, "man is incapable of sin . . . the real man cannot depart from holiness." "Evil is but an illusion, and error has no real basis, it is a false belief." (S. & H., 103rd ed., pp. 471, 476.) But if this view of sin be correct, if sin has no actual existence, then why did God become incarnate, why did He suffer and die? The denial of the reality of sin inevitably leads to but one end, the denial of the incarnation of Christ . . . . The incarnation, without the reality of sin, is meaningless.

Again the sufferings of Christ reveal to us the *nature* of sin. If sin required for its forgiveness the coming of the Son to suffer and to die, what a terrible thing sin must be! It cannot be a mere surface veneer, easily scraped off. It cannot be, as some hold, the remains of our supposed animal state, which is gradually to be worked, "evoluted" out of us generation by generation. It must be a taint, deeply ingrained in the very nature of each of us. Yea, it must be part of our very being itself.

It is a fixed principle of courts of justice that the penalty must exactly fit the crime if the ends of justice are to be met. In view of this principle look at the

penalty God demands for sin. What is this penalty? anything we can think, or do, or say, or give? No! it is the very heart's blood of His own Son. In view of such a penalty can we look lightly on sin?

And lastly, Christ's sufferings disclose the *extent* of sin's power. This is found in the words,—"us all." There is not one man, woman, or child who does not come under the power of sin. There is no one who dares to face God and say, "I have no sin. I am holy and pure." The dominion of sin is universal, both as to time and extent. Sin has reigned since the fall of Adam and will reign over the children of the world till the consummation of the Kingdom. It embraces every one, and continues from the moment of conception till the soul stands, before its Creator and its God. "I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me," laments the Psalmist. (Ps. 51:5.) "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way," sighs Isaiah (Is. 53:6.) "The scripture hath concluded all under sin," asserts the Apostle. (Gal. 3:22.)

Where then is our boasting? Shall we continue to glory in sin? Rather, let us cast ourselves prostrate, in humility and penitence, before the throne of God, and cry, "Lord, have mercy upon me, the chief of sinners."

3. The Pathway of Suffering as the Healer of Iniquity.

The Pathway of Suffering brings to us the healing of sins as well as the disclosing of them. Indeed, our sins have been revealed in order that we may escape

from them by the use of the means and the remedy provided by God. The Pathway of Suffering shows that "with his stripes we are healed." There is no short cut to the healing of sins. There is no road we may travel which permits us to avoid Christ, the suffering, the crucified Christ. No influence of social position, no craft of commercial enterprise, no glitter of gold, no brilliancy of intellect, no implication of fraternalism, no theory of social reform, no claim of ethical culture, no doctrine of human origin, none of these singly or combined can open for us the way out of sin into holiness and fellowship with God. There is but one way, Christ Jesus, and He, suffering and dying for sins. If we would travel with Christ the way into the Kingdom we must first travel with Him the Pathway of His Vicarious Suffering.

Hear the Word of God:

I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me.—John 14:6.

God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.—John 3:17, 18.

Sacrifice and offering and burnt offering and offerings for sin thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein. . . We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.—Heb. 10:8, 10, 14.

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD: ITS ORIGIN

I JOHN 1:3. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

Our theme fellowship with God is, perhaps, the greatest among all the evidences of God's graciousness toward sinners. Those are wonderfully sweet words of Jesus, where He says: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."[1] Those are "Heavenly words, with comfort fraught," where the Saviour says: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."[2] But who can tell the supreme sweetness, the precious comfort, and the marvelous peace and power which come to us when there is fulfilled in our life those gracious words of the Master, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."[3]

Some of us have for years had fulfilled in our lives the words,—Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ; others among us have just begun to know what this fellowship means; and there are still others who have not yet come to the point where they can say: "My Lord and My God."[4] Yet it makes little difference to which of these classes

[1] John 3:16. [2] Matt. 11:28. [3] Matt. 28:20.
[4] John 20:28.

any one of us may belong, for we all need fellowship with God, and we need it more abundantly day by day. So I wish to invite your attention now to the general topic,—Fellowship with God,—and in particular to the origin of fellowship with God.

When we wish to become acquainted with any person here on earth there are certain steps which must be taken if we want our acquaintance to be rightfully established and of such a character as will develop into a union of hearts in helpful fellowship. We must secure an introduction in an orderly and decent way.

How can such an introduction be secured? In decent circles, among clean men and women, this introduction must be brought about by the mediation of some mutual friend. This friend makes us acquainted with the person we desire to meet by bringing us together either in person or by a letter of introduction.

What is true in the confines of earthly society is also true in heavenly circles. If we wish to meet God, and have fellowship with Him, we must first be introduced to Him. Since God wishes to meet us, even as we do Him, He has provided the means by which we can be brought to Him. There is a mutual Friend, Who stands ready to introduce us to God by letter and in person, namely, the Lord Jesus Christ. "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."[5] "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us."[6] "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come

[5] I John 2:1. [6] Eph. 2:13, 14.

unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."[7]

But in order to make use of these means we must believe that they can secure for us the object of our desires. If we have no confidence in the ability of the person suggested to introduce us to the one we have been trying to meet we will not go to the person recommended. The same is true in making use of the divinely established means of becoming acquainted with God. Unless we believe that Christ can help us to meet God the Father we will not ask His aid.

Here, however, we are face to face with a condition that is peculiar to heavenly acquaintance. If one friend on earth cannot help us to meet the person we wish to know we can go to some other friend and seek his aid. This is not so when we seek to know God. Christ distinctly tells us "No man cometh unto the Father except by me."[8] We cannot avoid the Christ way into the presence of God. Scripture distinctly warns us, "He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."[9] Do you think it likely that He Who gave the command,—"Thou shalt not steal,"[10] or who in the Person of His Son describes heaven as the place "where no thief approacheth,"[11] or Who said through the Apostle Paul: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? . . . . Nor thieves . . . ,"[12] do you think He is likely to give you an open-armed reception if you try to break into His Presence in any other way than the way He

[7] Heb. 7:25. [8] John 14:6. [9] John 10:1.
[10] Exod. 20:15. [11] Luke 12:33. [12] I Cor. 6:9, 10.

Himself has established, which is Jesus the Christ?

Examine the lives of the Holy Men of God. What gave them the power to walk with Him? What enabled them to have fellowship with Him? It was not wealth, for Saul of Tarsus had this; yet, God did not receive him into His fellowship until he had accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Master. It was not Saul's position in society as a Roman citizen, it was not his wonderful mind trained at the feet of the greatest scholar of his day. It was the Christ, Who struck him blind on the road to Damascus, Who first led Saul into his place with God. It was not Matthew's poverty that brought him into fellowship with God. It was his hearing and his obeying of Christ's command,—"Follow me,"[13]—that led him to the open door of fellowship's place. It was not the Disciples' sufferings, or the persecutions they endured, that permitted them to see God, but it was their faith in Christ Jesus that called them from their earthly labors, made them fishers of men, and fellow-workers together with God. There is but "one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."[14] Truly has Christ said: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me."[15]

But what if we do have this willing faith? What if we do meet God by the Christ way? Will this alone constitute a fellowship with Him? Not at all. You and I have often been the means of bringing two persons together and yet there never grew up between them a true friendship. What was the trouble do you suppose? They would visit one another, they were cordial and polite when they met, but this was the extent of

[13] John 12:26. [14] I Tim. 2:5. [15] John 14:6.

their acquaintance. It was merely on the surface. It did not strike deep down into their hearts. What could have been the matter that they were not better friends?

There is a law in the physical world that is known as the law of sympathetic vibration. You and I have often seen this law in operation without perhaps being conscious of its existence. You have heard some one strike a note on some musical instrument and immediately some other object in the room would begin to tinkle. Why? because the second object was attuned to the first and the first to the second, there was an invisible, but none-the-less real, bond of sympathy between them.

This same law operates in the spiritual world. Unless our hearts are attuned to the heart of God there can be no response when He strikes the chord of companionship, when He plays the sweet melody of heavenly fellowship. There was a man by the name of Enoch of whom it is written in sacred history, "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not.; for God took him."[16] He walked with God,—why? His name gives us a clew. Enoch means in the old Hebrew tongue "dedicated, *or* disciplined and well regulated." Do you suppose for an instant that Enoch could have walked with God if he had been dedicated to a life of sin and shame, or if he had been disciplined, well regulated, that is, skilled in the things of hell? There was another man by the name of Noah, whose history is written in the same sacred Book, and of whom we read, "Noah walked with God."[17] How did he come to possess this blessed and precious companionship with God after he came

[16] Gen. 5:24. [17] Gen. 6:9.

to know God? Because, as it is said of him, "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations."[18] There was another man of whom it is written, "And the Lord was with Jehoshaphat."[19] Why, again? "Because he . . . . sought to the Lord, God . . . . , and walked in his commandments."[20]

Listen to some of God's own promises,—"Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart."[21] "Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me; he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me. He that worketh deceit shall not dwell in my house; he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight."[22]

Attuned to God through Christ Jesus. This is the secret of fellowship with the Father. The soul that would walk with God, must find his faith bringing forth its natural fruits. No man can say he believes in Christ, and therefore claim to know and to walk with God, unless he conscientiously tries by the help of the Spirit of God to walk uprightly, perfectly, justly, and purely before God. Without this realized in life no one can say he has fellowship with God. Without this you and I may call occasionally at His house and perhaps eat of His table. But this is as far as our acquaintance will go. God may tolerate such an acquaintance for a while with the hope that we will surrender to Him and become attuned to Him, but eventually He will surely reject and disown such fellowship.

[18] Gen. 6:9. [19] II Chron. 17:3. [20] II Chron. 17:4.
[21] Ps. 101:6, 7. [22] Matt. 25:34.

Since, then, this faith in Christ and this at-one-ment with God are so necessary to a fellowship with Him, the thought naturally arises,—How can I secure such a faith and such an at-one-ment?

Faith and at-one-ment with God can never be secured by human power or human agency. We cannot by our own strength or power of will come to Jesus Christ, believe on Him, and receive the gift of fellowship with God. God alone must so touch our hearts that they may receive the power to turn to Him, to have an efficient faith in His Son. The origin of all faith and fellowship "is the free, good, gracious will of God . . . it is solely God's gift and boon." In the Acts of the Apostles Paul and Barnabas relate how they came to the great Gentile world of sin and this is their testimony,—"They rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles."[23] Paul tells us that "the fruit of the Spirit is . . . faith."[24] Again he writes, "God is faithful, by whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."[25] "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."[26] "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."[27] "What hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"[28] "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."[29]

[23] Acts 14:27. [24] Gal. 5:22. [25] I Cor. 1:9.
[26] I Cor. 2:14. [27] I Cor. 3:11. [28] I Cor. 4:7.
[29] I Cor. 12:3.

God gives this faith and this fellowship through His Word of Scripture. The means by which God places faith in the heart and attunes the heart to Himself is the preaching of the Word. God says: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."[30] In His last great prayer on earth Christ said: "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me."[31] And He also added: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word."[32] Peter also tells of those "who by him do believe in God,"[33] that they are "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever . . . . And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."[34]

A few years ago a faithful servant of God lay on his death bed. For years he had preached God's Word and worked God's will until, like Moses, his face shone with the light of God's presence, power, and peace. As he lay dying his people begged for a last message. And what a message it was! simple, true, eternal, like the spirit of the dying servant. "Keep close to the Word," was his last message. "Keep close to the Word!" What Word? The incarnate Word of God, Jesus Christ, Who, "though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."[35] "Keep close to the Word!" What Word? The Word of the Spirit's testimony, written in God's Book, the

[30] Rom. 10:17. [31] John 17:8. [32] John 17:20.
[33] I Pet. 1:21. [34] I Pet. 1:23-25, *passim*. [35] II Cor. 8:9.

Bible. "Keep close to the Word" and you will walk in the presence of the living God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to Whom be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD: ITS NATURE

I JOHN 1:5-10; 2:9-16. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

But he that hateth his brother is in darkness and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.

I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

In the preceding discourse we studied together the root of fellowship with God. As we studied that topic we found

that faith is the golden key which unlocks the gates of heaven and admits us to fellowship with God. We saw, first of all, that we must have faith in Christ's willingness and ability to bring us to God; secondly, that this saving faith must become a living reality in our daily life, a power helping us to live the God-life so essential to true fellowship with Him; thirdly, we found this saving and living faith is the free gift of God, Who loves us and gave His Son for us; and lastly we learned that only as we keep close to the Word, the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, and the Word of the Spirit's testimony preserved for us in the Bible, can we enter into the holy place of God's fellowship.

We are now going to look at the nature of this fellowship with God. And for our text we have chosen I John 1:5-10, and 2:9-16.

We notice again the first great and fundamental truth of our spiritual life,—the ever-present power of sin and its conquest by God's love. Friendship with God is not natural with us. By nature we are the enemies of God because we are the children of wrath through our sinful condition. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

What do these words of Scripture mean? Just this, before sin came into the world through the disobedience of Adam, there was a full fellowship with God. Then man walked hand in hand with God. Then man

conversed freely every day with his Creator. In those happy days of man's innocence there was no barrier of sin between him and his Maker, there was no interruption in the free and full fellowship with God the Father.

As soon as Adam disobeyed God and ate of the fruit of the forbidden tree then this precious fellowship with God was broken. "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself . . . . Therefore the Lord God . . . . drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life."[1]

Adam and Eve, the first children of God, because of sin, must hide themselves from Him. From this moment on their fellowship with God, and through them our fellowship as well, was destroyed. The fellowship of love is now to be transformed into the fellowship of law and flight from the face of God. Henceforth men were to hide themselves from the presence of the Lord God.

But God in His great love for the fallen did not take from them every vestige of hope and consolation. God gave to Adam and Eve, before He drove them out of Eden, the promise of a road that should one day lead them and their children back again into the garden of

[1] Gen. 3:8-24, *passim.*

fellowship. The seed of the woman should one day triumph over the serpent, crushing its head, the seat of its power and poison. Of this seed John tells us in these words,—"The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

And this is the first thing we note about fellowship with God,—it is a fellowship of cleansing. As soon as you come into the presence of God you enter the place which is most holy, and like Moses of old, you must put off the shoes of your earthly life, for the ground on which you stand is holy. The moment you come into the banquet chamber of God's house, you are met at the door by God's Servant, Who gives you the garment of righteousness to cover the dust and dirt of your sinful journey. To every soul which comes by the Christ way into the presence of God, is given to know the same experience as Joshua had. "And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; . . . . is not this a brand plucked out of the burning? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the Lord stood by."[2]

In the second place, fellowship with God is marked

[2] Zech. 3: 1-5.

by light. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not speak the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another."

Here are contrasted two opposing elements, light and darkness. One is typical of walking with God, the other of walking with the devil. When we walk with God, we walk in the light of God, for "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." If we have fellowship with Him we share this light.

Just consider for a moment what it means to have light. The light of day, as it shines down upon us, guides us in the course of our daily life. It helps us to walk in such a way that we may avoid danger and escape harm. The light of God's fellowship is also a daily guide. His light brightens the path of our spiritual way and we are enabled to avoid the dangers hell places in our way and helped to escape the harm Satan would bring upon us. Moreover, by this light of God, we can always keep God in sight, for as His light shines down God is constantly revealing Himself to us and we do not drift apart in the darkness of the world of sin about us.

Again light is a signal of warning. Light tells us of the presence of danger. All along our sea-coasts are hundreds of light-ships, light-houses, beacons, etc. These are the means the sailor has of discovering the presence of danger, of detecting the nearness of hidden rocks, of treacherous shoals, of tricky channels. As these lights show the pilot where the danger is he is able to steer away from it and thus a shipwreck is avoided.

So with the light of God. It warns us of the dangers of sin and helps us to steer clear of the death hidden in these dangers.

Moreover, light is absolutely necessary for a perfect and vigorous life. Some of you have perhaps been raised on farms or in country districts from which, in spite of the advice of your loving parents and against their earnest wishes, you have drifted into the city and its sin. You can remember how Mother would take those geranium plants, hang them up in the cellar for the winter, and then in the Spring bring them out for replanting. Do you see the plant after its winter in the dark cellar? It is not very pretty to look at; it does not look as if one bit of life remained in it. What brought the once beautiful, green, fragrant plant to this dried-out, lifeless condition? Just one thing,—lack of light. So it is in the life history of every soul. As long as it keeps in the light of God's fellowship it stays green, fresh, and sweet, fit for the Master's heavenly garden. But the minute the soul is taken away from God's light and placed in the darkness of hell's cellar of sin and evil it begins to loose its sweetness, its freshness, and its life fragrance. But what a change in that plant as soon as Mother placed it in that little pot of sand or light soil, right there in the window where the sun streamed in on it day after day! Soon the dried, stiff stalks begin to soften and fill out until every wrinkle and dead spot have disappeared. Then a little leaf bursts out here and another there, and then it is ready for outdoor planting and its new summer of beauty, sweetness, and fragrance. What brought about this marvelous change? The light of God's heavens. So it

is again with your soul when it has lost its beauty, its freshness, and its fragrance through the darkness of sin. When your soul comes again into the light of God's fellowship, even though it be as empty of life as a desert, God's light of love, mercy, and grace can make that dead, dry, ugly soul "blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly."[3]

Again fellowship with God is marked by a spirit of unworldliness. In I John 2:15, 16 we read,—"Love not the world neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, . . . is not of the Father, but is of the world." The world and God are always in a state of conflict and opposition because of the evil nature of the world. The world is the place of "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." Lust and pride, twin spawn of Satan's breeding, cradled in hell, and fed with iniquity, cannot endure the presence of God. How then, if you walk in their company, can you have God's fellowship? Christ, Himself, calls the devil "the prince of this world."[4] If you are of the world, you are the devil's subject, he is your ruler. And if you are his subject and he your ruler, how then can you belong to God at the same time? Paul, speaking by the inspiration of the Spirit of God, writes to the Corinthians,—"If our gospel is veiled it is veiled to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine forth."[5] There it is, the old combination,—"the god of this

[3] Isa. 35:1. [4] John 12:31. [5] II Cor. 4:3, 4.

world," no light, spiritual blindness. And if you harbor in your soul this trinity of evil, how can the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit make you His temple and come to dwell and fellowship with you?

If there is to be any fellowship with God, everything that partakes of the world must be driven out of the soul. All lusts, evil desires, everything and anything that binds the soul to the world must be broken and cast away. Every weed of worldliness must be torn out by the roots. No mere hoeing off of their tops will be sufficient, for these lusts are of Satan's planting, and like all weeds, their roots only spread farther and farther the more you cut off the tops. Then, when they do break through the surface again, what a crop there is! Root them out; tear them out; this alone is the safe way.

But this you can and will never do alone. Satan's weeds are too well rooted for feeble, human power to pull out of the hard soil of death. There must be a looking to "the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world."[6] You and I must come to the point where we make the good confession of the Samaritans, —"We believe, . . . and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."[7] Everyone must pin his soul's future to Him, Who "is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."[8] And then, as the sinner is led into the fellowship with the Father, he will be able to say: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."[9]

[6] John 1:29. [7] John 4:42. [8] I John 2:2. [9] Gal. 6:14.

And finally, fellowship with God is characterized by love. "He that saith he is in the light and hateth his brother, is in the darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light. . . ."

We have already learned that to be in the light is to walk with God. We are told now that he who loves is in the light and therefore walks with God.

The importance which God attaches to the existence of love in the heart is shown by the frequent repetition of the word *love* in the Bible. Some four hundred times do God's servants tell us about love; some four hundred times does the call to a life of love sound in the spirit when God's holy men speak to us in the Bible. Love is the greatest thing in the world because it is the greatest thing in God. "God so loved," these words strike the key-note of the entire revelation of God. The counter proposition to this key-note of Scripture is no less centered around love, for as Paul says: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema."[10] The entire will of God revolves about love. "But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."[11] "All they that hate me love

[10] I Cor. 16: 22. [11] Matt. 22: 34-40.

death,"[12] says Christ, the Wisdom of God. "Follow after . . . love . . . ,"[13] is Paul's advice to the young Timothy as a "man of God." "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and the brother of James,"[14] writing "to them that are called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ,"[15] says: "Keep yourselves in the love of God."[16] Says John: "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." God "chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him; having in love predestinated us for adoption."[17] It is the great prayer of Paul "that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled, even to all the fullness of God."[18]

"And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."[19]

"And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming."[20] "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."[21]

[12] Prov. 8:36. [13] I Tim. 6:11. [14] Jude 1.
[15] Jude 1. [16] Jude 21. [17] Eph. 1:4, 5.
[18] Eph. 3:17-19. [19] I Cor. 13:13. [20] I John 3:28.
[21] I John 4:16.

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD: ITS PROOFS

I JOHN 3: 10-24. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

Not as Cain, *who* was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death.

Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

Hereby perceive we the love *of God,* because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.

But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, *then* have we confidence toward God.

And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

We now come to the third part of our study of fellowship with God. For a little while let us try

to study God's precious Word, which is able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus; that Word, of which the blessed Saviour said: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free;"[1] that Word, of which the Holy Spirit, speaking through the Apostle, said: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be ready, thoroughly equipped for every good work."[2]

What does our portion of this wonderful Word here tell us? It brings to us the four great proofs of a life that is hid in Christ Jesus. These proofs we find to be (1) the proof of the world; (2) the proof of the heart; (3) the proof of brotherly love; (4) the abiding proof of a pure heart.

The proof of the world. At first glance it may seem a contradiction of all revealed truth for any one to look for a proof of fellowship with God in the testimony of the world. But this very contradiction is the proof we are seeking. Christ tells us that the world has nothing in common with the believer. He who walks with God can never have any communion with the world. And just here lies the secret of the world's testimony in favor of the believer. Were the world living in harmony with the Christian, were there no enmity to be found between the world and the follower of God, there could be no testimony on the part of the world as to how near we are to God. From the reality of the enmity which exists between the world and Christ springs the

[1] John 8:32, 33. [2] II Tim. 3:16.

surety of the world's testimony for you and me.

The world hated Christ with a bitter hatred. In the Gospels are recorded time and again many instances of this hatred of the world for the Son of God. The world hated Christ because He convicted it of sin; the world hated Him because He showed it the eternal destruction that awaits all sinning against the holy will of the Father; the world hated the Saviour because He called it to forsake evil and to follow after righteousness, without which no one can please God. Purity, revealing the awfulness of impurity, always calls forth the hatred of impurity.

And because the world hated Christ it plotted with the devil to put Christ out of the way. For three long years the conflict went on, as He Himself hints in the parable of the unfruitful fig tree,—"A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of the vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on the fig tree, and find none; cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?"[3] Their plotting finally bore fruit, and Christ was betrayed into the hands of sinners to be murdered by sin, yet for sin, on the Cross.

The world hated Christ. The world still hates Christ because He was not and is not of the world. They are, indeed, extraordinary parents who hate and persecute their own offspring. It is unnatural for a father or a mother to hate one of their children. But Christ is not the child of the devil and his wife, the world; He is "the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and

[3] Luke 13:6, 7.

truth."[4] Hence the world bears for Him an implacable, an unending, an undying hatred.

As the world hates Christ, so it hates everyone who loves Him and accepts Him as Redeemer and King, as the only Mediator between God, the Father, and man. Matthew has preserved these words of Christ for us, "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake."[5] John records for us that the Master once said: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you."[6] Indeed, the servant is not above his Master, Jesus the Christ. As the world hates Him, so it hates everyone who believes in Him and would be led by Him to the Father, to His Father and our Father, who is in heaven.

This, then, is the glorious contradiction from which also comes our assurance of fellowship with God. Though we are in the world, we are not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world. As we are separated from the world, so we are separated from the things of the world of which Paul tells us in his letter to the Galatian Christians,—"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I tell you beforehand, as I have told you

[4] John 1:14. [5] Matt. 10:22. [6] John 15:18-20.

in time past, that they that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."[7] A pretty list, indeed. One that brings joy and peace, satisfaction and safety to the soul. What? You say, "No." Then you admit that you can not walk with God and the World at the same time. No, you cannot, for you cannot be the followers of love and of hatred at the same time. So I ask you now: "How is the world treating you? Are you a hale fellow, well met, welcomed as a boon companion?" Then I say: "You are far from fellowship with God, for your present companions are spawn of hell's making." "How is the world treating you? Like it treated Christ?" Then I say: "Good. It is well with your soul. You have come at last to walk with God. Go in peace."

Again we may know that we are walking with God from the condition of our hearts. "And hereby we know that we are of the truth, . . . For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God."

In the heart of every true, sincere follower of Christ, the Holy Spirit dwells and teaches the difference between right and wrong. To do this He takes the Law and constantly brings us face to face with its demands. Then, when we begin to see how far we fall short of keeping this Law, the Spirit awakens a great desire in us to measure up to God's standard. When we feel no such desire to live the God life, there is no answering peace, only an evergrowing sense of helplessness and hopelessness, which, with the passing of days and years

[7] Gal. 5: 19-21.

spent in sin, finally crushes the heart and blots out forever the sinner's name from the Book of Life.

As the heart responds to the teaching and leading of the Holy Spirit, a still, small voice begins to say: "Peace, be still." This is the voice of the divinely purified and enlightened conscience. When the conscience speaks of peace and goodwill the believer can lay his head down in safety each night and say: "Dear Lord, it has been all right with us today. Praise be to Thy holy Name." We know then that we have been with God. The voice of conscience has not condemned but adsolved us.

But, when the heart condemns, when it tells us we are not living as God would have us live, then it is time to begin a very earnest, prayerful self-examination, with the Word of God as the standard by which to judge our condition, as the mirror in which to see ourselves as we are, for if our heart condemn us it is certain we are not walking with God.

Moreover, if the heart, with all its sin, weakness, and ignorance of unrighteousness, still has the power to condemn us, what must be the attitude of God, Who is so infinitely greater than any human heart? If the conscience, hemmed in by sin as it is, deprived by the power of sin of an ability to make a complete, correct, and sincere self-examination can yet see that we are not at one with the Father, then truly God's knowledge of our life must be something awful. How clearly must He see the sinfulness of our life. How every evil thought, every wicked deed, every foul word must strike Him, wound Him, pain His loving heart, pierce His very righteousness with the sharp pain born of rebellion against His sacred Person and His holy will.

But, though God is greater than the heart, His greatness is no reason for the sinner to give up the fight and to flee in despair of His mercy. When the Holy Spirit accuses any one it is not simply to strike the heart with terror and to fill the soul with fear. These feelings do come and they do plague the soul, but they come to warn, to turn the sinning soul away from the death to the good way of life. The Spirit rebukes, strikes the heart with terror, fills the soul with a great unrest, and all for one great, good, and glorious purpose,—to recall us from the way of sin, judgment, wrath, and eternal misery, and to make us look to Him Who died for the sins of the world, that He might be not only "the Prince of life,"[8] "the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;"[9] but also the "finisher of faith."[10]

But stop! A word of warning from God. There is such a thing as a spurious conscience, a conscience which is only an imitation and therefore a deceiver. Satan may have such control over a soul that that heart can no longer know when it sins against God. Time and again some one has told me that there is no such thing as sin; that God is such a good, kind, loving God you could not be condemned to eternal misery in hell; that no matter what is done in this world there is always a chance to make good in some higher existence in the world to come; and other such tommy rot, finding no leg to stand on in the Scriptures, no substantiating evidence from history, no ground in any sane personal experience. The soul, which trafficks with the devil with such excuses to cover his sin, is playing with hell fire; he is hugging to his breast the coals of wrath and

[8] Acts 3:15. [9] Heb. 6:19. [10] Heb. 12:12.

just judgment against sin and every form of unrighteousness. And I ask you: "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?"[11]

There is an economy in the craft of the devil. He does not waste time tempting the soul that is already in his power. When, therefore, the voice of conscience never condemns but always absolves, it is certain that there is no fellowship with God in that life, no place for the Master in that heart, no power of the Holy Spirit in that soul. Beware of the conscience which always pats you on the back, always tells you how good you are, and never says: "Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy."[12] Watch, yes, but "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."[13] And above all "stand fast in the faith."[14]

Still a third proof of fellowship with God is a spirit of love. "And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him."

If we have fellowship with God we have become eccentric, that is, "departing *from* the *centre,*" as the dictionary explains this word. What is the great centre of every sinful life? The same centre that sin has, namely, "I." The soul that is self-centered may know at once it is not in accord with its Creator. We must "revolve round others who have been to us as yet unthought of, or thought of as helps or hindrances to us."

[11] Prov. 6:27, 28. [12] Lev. 19:2. [13] Matt. 26:41.
[14] I Cor. 16:13.

We must "revolve around others in loving-kindness and faith," instead of making others and our "dealings with them revolve round us."

There are souls this moment, souls that were one time your companions in sin. What are you doing to bring them to Christ that they may be your "bread-fellows" in salvation? There are souls this moment, souls that were your companions in the misery of sin. What are you doing to bring them away from their misery that they may no longer feed on ashes, but feast on "the true bread from heaven,"[15] even "he who cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world?"[16] To these you must now turn to comfort them in sickness, encourage them in distress, fill them with hope in the hour of despair, to share with them what you have when they are in want, and to guide them to the Saviour that they may "look on him whom they pierced"[17] with their sins, and looking, live.

If we so love that we joyfully do these things, then we are walking with God.

And finally there is the fourth great proof of fellowship with God. We have seen the proof of the world, the proof of the heart, the proof of love. Now let us examine the proof of a pure life.

In a way the proof of a pure life includes all the proofs we have so far considered. No life is a pure life in God's sight unless it fulfills the requirements which have been the subject of our study so far. Yet the proof of a pure life is different from the proofs mentioned already. It differs in this,—it involves primarily the believer's relation to himself.

[15] John 6:32. [16] John 6:33. [17] John 19:37.

The believer's service to himself. What is meant by this? Simply this. A pure life is one which demands a perfect and intelligent use of the gifts God has given us. The first of these gifts is the body. God has given, yes, really loaned us our bodies to use for Him and His service. Therefore we dare not use up the strength of the body in any habit or indulgence that has a tendency to or actually does harm the body. The believer dare not waste his physical strength in self-indulgence, in the secret practice of any form of self-gratification.

The ancient heathen, who knew nothing about Jesus Christ nor the wonderfully beautiful love of God in Christ, had enough appreciation of God's will to see that He could associate with them only on the ground of purity. These people built marvelous temples of the purest marble and the most precious jewels, and the costliest of painting and sculpture were added to adorn the structure and make it the very symbol of all that is beautiful and noble. Now, when these heathen had finished their beautiful costly temples, what was the next step? Did they say: "Well, let's go into the city and find how much mud and dirt and ashes and garbage we can find, and then let's dump it in the temple." If any one had tried even to suggest such a thing he would have been torn to bits.

Yet, how many there are, even among the professed followers of Christ, who are ready to defile God's temple, defile it, mar its purity and beauty, with the mud and the dirt, the ashes and garbage of secret self-indulgence. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroy the temple of God, him shall God de-

stroy; for the temple of God is holy, and such are ye,"[18] for you have been purified by the blood of God. So the Spirit warns us and tells us that if we defile the temple of God we have no fellowship with Him. "Touch not the unclean thing," God warns, and then He adds, "I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters."[19] I do not know what secret habits you may have, and I do not want to know; but this one thing I do want you to know that you cannot sin against the body, undermine its strength, and expect God to walk with you and overlook this sin. "Ye have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out."[20]

In addition to an intelligent and right use of the body, there must also be a right use of the mind. When God wants to know how a soul is really living He looks at a man's thoughts. As the condition of a man's mind, so is the condition of his life. If we have a mind, impure, not free from evil and sinful thoughts, if the mind is always leaning toward the things that reflect the low, the mean, the smutty things of life, then indeed, it is very doubtful whether there is any fellowship with God. "The thought of foolishness is sin,"[21] says the Book. As the sinner "thinketh in his heart, so is he."[22] Therefore, Jesus, Who knows your every thought, says to you: "Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?"[23] And through His servant, Christ calls the evil-minded to repentance, saying: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee. For I

[18] I Cor. 3:16, 17. [19] II Cor. 6:17, 18. [20] Num. 32:23.
[21] Prov. 24:9. [22] Prov. 23:7. [23] Matt. 9:4.

perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity."[24] "Think soberly"[25] is the divine command, the advice of love. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things . . . and the God of peace shall be with you."[26]

There is still one more thing in the intelligent, godly service we would render. This involves the soul. A pure life, a right use of body and mind, all these are dependent upon the condition of the soul. By nature we are sinful and unclean. By nature our souls are so far from God that they cannot do the things of God. Since the natural condition of the soul is one far from God it must be in a corrupt condition, one filled with sin and suffering the consequences of sin. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither indeed can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."[27] Wherefore, because we are so bound by the power of sin that we cannot be aware of God's things in life, we are "by nature children of wrath."[28]

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath given us life together with Christ Jesus."[29] That is, God sent His only begotten Son into the world to seek and to save the souls of sinners. Through the death of Christ, through His perfect fulfillment of the

[24] Acts 8:22, 23. [25] Rom. 12:3. [26] Phil. 4:8, 9.
[27] I Cor. 2:14. [28] Eph. 2:3. [29] Eph. 2:4, 5.

will of God, our souls may come to a state of purity in spite of their naturally depraved condition. The righteousness of Christ is made to cover the sinning soul, when that soul accepts Him in faith and repentance. Whoever is baptized in the Name of the one and triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to that person is given the purity of Christ's own soul. "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify it, cleansing it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."[30] Yes, "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."[31] And he who has put on Christ is a member of Christ's Church and so has all the characteristics of Christ's Church. If we have completely surrendered to Christ, and have cast ourselves on the mercy and grace of God, then we have a pure and godly life, for we have a soul which is hid in Christ Jesus.

These then are the great proofs of a life that walks with God: (1) the hatred of the world toward us because we are not of the world but of Christ; (2) the voice of the Holy Spirit, speaking to the believer through the enlightened, purified conscience; (3) the love of Christ going out through us as we try to bring others to a knowledge of the Saviour; (4) the soul, hid in Christ, living, speaking, thinking only the things of Christ. Let each of us earnestly pray the Father that He will give us these proofs in ever-increasing clearness and strength in our lives day by day.

[30] Eph. 5:25, 26. [31] Gal. 3:27.

THE COMPASSION OF CHRIST.

MARK 8: 1-9. In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples *unto him,* and saith unto them.

I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat:

And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far.

And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these *men* with bread here in the wilderness!

And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven.

And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before *them;* and they did set *them* before the people.

And they had a few small fishes: and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before *them.*

So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken *meat* that was left seven baskets.

And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

In the course of the story of Christ's life, as recorded in the Gospels, there are four distinct occasions on which it is said of Him that He had compassion on the multitudes which crowded about Him to hear His wonderful words and to see His marvelous miracles. The first of these is when Christ had compassion on the multitudes because they were like sheep without a shepherd to guide them to pasture and protect them from danger. The second account is connected with the miracle of healing, for, when Christ saw the multitude, He "was moved with compassion toward them, and

healed their sick."[1] Then the sacred historians record two more instances where Christ had compassion on the multitudes. Both of these are connected with great miracles by which Jesus fed vast companies of people, first 5,000 men, besides women and children, and then 4,000 men in addition to the women and children.

In each of these four instances there are two words which stand out above all others,—*Compassion* and *Multitude*. These two words are inseparably linked together and give us a wonderfully beautiful picture of the Master among sinners.

The compassion of Jesus. What great thoughts these words ought to awaken in the heart of every sinner who feels the sting of his rebellion against his God and longs for some sign of the mercy from the just King of heaven and earth.

The prodigal son, having spent "his substance with riotous living. . . . began to be in want."[2] What was the nature of his want? food? clothing? shelter? Yes, all of these, for "there arose a mighty famine in that land."[3] But the greatest want was in his own heart. He was suffering the famine created by the great want of love, of sympathy, of compassion. He longed to hear again the sweet songs of his childhood. He yearned to have about him, if only for a moment, the arms of his father, who loved him and even now was praying for that wandering boy. His was not the famine of the flesh, his was the famine of the heart and the spirit.

One day "he came to himself," and "he said, . . . I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him,

[1] Matt. 14: 14. [2] Luke 15: 14. [3] Luke 15: 14.

Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants."[4] "I have sinned." Here is the hidden secret of his want, here is the one cause of the famine of his heart and the hidden hunger of his struggling soul. Sin, sin, sin; gnawing, feeding itself on his vitals, until "he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat."[5] Snatching at this straw of hope, grasping in despair at any chance to escape the powers of hell, veritably feeding his heart and his soul on the swine food prepared in Satan's kitchen. A heart and a soul crying out unknowingly to the living God for His infinite compassion.

The compassion of Christ. What reason can the sinning soul find to call for a share in Christ's compassion? Why, the very word itself gives the greatest reason. *Compassion:* fellow-feeling, a suffering, not only for, but especially with the suffering one. Christ, suffering with the sinner. Yes, this is the great truth of God's Word. Listen to what God has to say on this point. "Though he [that is, Christ] were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered."[6] "Seeing then that . . . we have not a high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tested like as we are, . . . Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace for help in time of need."[7]

"The things which he suffered." Glorious truth of God's revealing. Christ suffered "our infirmities."

[4] Luke 15: 17-19. [5] Luke 15: 16. [6] Heb. 5: 8.
[7] Heb. 4: 14-16.

"Did He?" you say. Listen again to God's own record of what His Son, Jesus Christ suffered with you.

Have you been hungry? So has Christ. "When he fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered."[8] So writes the Spirit of God. Have you felt the torture of thirst? So has Christ. "After this, Jesus . . . saith, I thirst."[9] Have you been weary? So has Christ. Says God's Spirit again: "Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well."[10] Has your heart felt the sting of sorrow? So has the heart of Christ. "Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto his disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death."[11] Have you been homeless? Christ Himself said: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."[12] Have you been deserted, or still worse, betrayed by those you thought your truest friends? Christ, too, was deserted and betrayed by those He trusted. "In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a robber with swords and staves for to take me? . . Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled."[13] "Judas, one of the twelve, ... drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?"[14] Have you been tempted, not once, but many times to do some great sin against

[8] Matt. 4:2. [9] John 19:28. [10] John 4:6. [11] Matt. 26:36-38.
[12] Matt. 8:20. [13] Matt. 26:56. [14] Luke 22:47, 48.

your God? Jesus, too, knew what it means to fight a mighty battle with a mighty foe. Go home and read that mighty story of Christ's temptation and His mighty victory as it is written in the fourth chapter of Matthew's life of the Master of men. "Jesus . . . . tempted of the devil."[15] These are the opening words of this account. "Tempted of the devil," not once, or twice, but again and again. Have you sometimes felt that God Himself has utterly forsaken you and left you to perish, a victim of those forces, circumstances, and devilish persons which have haunted you and given your poor heart and your anguished soul no rest day or night? Then know that Christ felt even this most terrible and terrifying of all trials. Jesus is hanging on the cross. He is suffering the torments of hell in body and soul. His very being is racked with the torments of the greatest agony of His life. There is a great "darkness over all the land."[16] It is black with death within and without. Suddenly a piercing shriek cuts the darkness like a flash of lightning. It is the voice of the suffering, tortured, dying soul of Christ. Hear it. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"[17]

Enough. Let us not rush in where angels fear to tread. We have seen enough to know that Christ has indeed suffered, suffered "our infirmities" and His loving heart now bids all to come to Him, with every want, suffering, and sin. He invites you now to come and to have part in His grace; invites, because He knows from actual experience just what is wrong and what is needed to right the wrong.

[15] Matt. 4 : 1. [16] Matt. 27 : 45. [17] Matt. 27 : 46.

You do not have to eat the husks, fit only for swine, because they have been made by the master of swine. You can have a heavenly feast for that heavy heart. Jesus says: "I have compassion on the multitude, because they . . . have had nothing to eat: and if I send them away fasting . . . they will faint by the way; for divers of them have come from far . . . And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them; and they did set them before the people. And they had a few small fishes: and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before them. So they did eat . . ."

"They did eat." Food for the famishing in body, yes, but above all the famishing in soul. The bread of life He gives to you, gives with His divine blessing, gives that you may eat. He "gave thanks," we are told. The words He uttered are not written down, but it is certain that He prayed the Father in heaven to show forth His love and His mercy that the hungry might be fed; it is certain Christ prayed for the welfare of those precious, wandering souls, prayed for the coming into their life of the Spirit of truth, Who could set them free from their bondage to sin. And as He prayed the Father in heaven heard, pouring out on them the manna of life in the gracious words of His only-begotten Son. "So they did eat."

But they did more than this. The historian adds,—"And were filled." This is the wonderfully glorious thing about salvation and all of God's gifts, especially when they are for the welfare of the soul. Not only is a partial meal given, but every need is fully supplied.

Note I say *need*. All have *wants*, but there is a vast difference in God's sight between our wants and our needs. Some time ago I was visiting a certain hospital where drug fiends are sent. In one of the little rooms was a woman, who was shrieking for some one to come and give her an injection of morphine. This was her want, her desire, her craving. But what she really needed was the saving and keeping power of God, given to the repentant sinner and applied daily to daily weakness as each weakness fought for the right to rule over the eternal things of the soul. I tell you, if you have a real need, if in that need you call out in prayer to the Father, believing that in His Son He will not keep from you what you need to make the crooked things of your life straight, the weak things strong, and the strong things unconquerable, I tell you if you will turn to God in prayer you will not only receive temporary relief, but a lasting satisfying benefit for soul and body.

"And they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets." Not only enough, but some to spare. How like God! Does it not recall to you what you learned, many of you as children, of God's gospel measure? "Good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over."[18] Does it not remind you of the time you learned the words of the shepherd king? "My cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."[19]

Always something left over when God gives. This is to make you take courage. No doubt you have often thought it useless to ask God to feed the hunger of your soul because you thought your hunger too great.

[18] Luke 6:38. [19] Ps. 23:5, 6.

Surely the God, Who can feed more than 4,000 at one time, feed them from a few bits of bread and a few small fishes, feed them so that they "were filled," and then still have seven large baskets of food left, surely this God will not find it hard to feed your one hungry soul. No one need fear to go to God because of the thought, "Has He enough; can He; will He help?" God not only can and will, He offers you more than enough to encourage you and to lead you to know that no matter how great may be your need, no matter how often you may need His help, there will always be enough for the satisfying of each need and some left over for the next time. The old servant of God testified: "The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord; he is their strength in the time of trouble. And the Lord shall help them, and deliver them; he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him."[20] The prophet of God says of God's dealings with sinful, rebellious Israel: "In the time of their trouble, when they cried unto thee, thou heardest them from heaven, and according to thy manifold mercies thou gavest them saviours, who saved them out of the hand of their enemies . . . when they returned, and cried unto thee, thou heardest them from heaven; and many times didst thou deliver them according to thy mercies."[21]

The king of heaven His table spreads,
And dainties crown His board.
Not all the boasted joys of earth
Could such delight afford.

[20] Ps. 37:39, 40.
[21] Neh. 9:27, 28.

Pardon and peace to dying men,
And endless life are given;
And the rich blood that Jesus shed
To raise our souls to heaven.

Thousands of souls in glory now,
Were fed and feasted here;
And thousands more still on the way
Around the board appear.

Are you one of these blessed ones?

THE REALITY AND NATURE OF HELL.

MATT. 23 : 33, and MATT. 25 : 30, 41. Ye serpents, *ye* generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

Some time ago I had a conversation with a man in one of our city hospitals. I had been trying to lead him to an acceptance of Christ by the way of God's love for fallen men. Every approach on this line was repulsed and with each new attempt on my part to make him think a little about the eternal welfare of his soul he became more and more abusive. Finally I changed my tactics and instead of appealing to him on the grounds of God's love I began to attack him with the Law of God, endeavoring in this way to startle his conscience and make him confess that he was a condemned creature in the sight of the righteous Judge of heaven. This line of attack failed too. And why? Because the man had fallen so far from the truth that he had no conception of what it means to meet the living God and to be condemned by Him to an eternity in hell. Indeed, he denied the existence of hell, saying he had no fear of what did not have any place in the universe.

As I kept pressing God's truth home to him, he finally turned, like an animal at bay, and said: "Why I guess I never did any harm to anybody." To this I replied: "Perhaps not. But did you ever do any good

for anybody. What, for instance, did you ever do to help a drunkard?" Quick as a flash the answer came back: "Who ever helped me when I was drunk?"

With these words this poor soul, which has since gone to its Maker, tried to evade the issue of sin,—hell. As he said these words I was reminded of the remark of an old saint of God,—"Those most anxious to deny the existence of hell are most frequently the ones who are closest to hell."

The one great claim of all who deny the existence of hell is that this truth "was added to the gospel." This claim cannot hold water. It is utterly false, and has as its end, not the getting rid of hell, but the getting rid of the Scripture's testimony against sin and the unrepentant sinner. For this class, as a warning from God to forsake their blasphemy, and to everyone here, who may be on the border line, as a call to stand fast in the truth, I wish to show you, from the Gospel, that is the New Testament, that there is such a place for condemned souls as "hell."

The Bible, as it is right here in front of me on this desk, is in every respect the same as that which came from the hands of the inspired writers. Time does not permit an extended proof of this statement. Suffice it to say that the testimony of the ages, embracing the most wonderful array of great minds, both of the friends and opponents of the Church, is unanimous on this point. It has been conclusively proven that the entire Bible as we have it can be restored, with the exception of some twenty verses, from the quotations of the friends and enemies of the Church who lived in the first two centuries of the Christian era.

Now the question is,—"Does this Bible teach the reality of hell as a place of punishment for wicked, unrepentant souls?" From the Bible the answer comes in no hesitating voice. Both the Old and the New Testaments teach the reality of hell's existence.

I cannot take the time to quote at length from the Old Testament to prove that it teaches the existence of hell. And after all, the opponents of hell do not bother themselves much about the Old Testament. What they are after is to discredit the Gospel and the authority of Christ and His Church. So I pass over the Old Testament, only asking you to notice such passages as these:

"And they shall go forth, and shall look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched."[1]

"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting fire, and to shame and everlasting contempt."[2]

Let us see now, whether there is any truth in the claim that the doctrine of hell has been added to the Gospel and that this doctrine was never taught by Christ or His twelve Disciples.

In my presentation of the Bible evidence against these false statements, I shall quote in full from Matthew, then give a list of the teaching of the other Evangelists, and finally quote in full again from the Book of Revelation.

Matthew 5: 22. Whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. *5: 29, 30.* And if thy right eye ensnare thee, pluck it out, and cast it from

[1] Isa. 66: 24. [2] Dan. 12: 2.

thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body be cast into hell. And if thy right hand ensnare thee, cut it off and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should go into hell. *10: 28.* Fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. *11: 23.* And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell. *13: 30.* I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them. *13: 40-42.* As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. *16: 18.* And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. *23: 15.* Ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. *23: 33.* Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the judgment of hell. *25: 46.* And these shall go away into everlasting punishment.

Whose words are these? They are the statements of Christ Himself. Are they plain? Do they teach the reality of hell? You cannot deny they do. So, then, Christ did teach the reality of hell's existence and He taught it in the midst of His gospel, the message of possible salvation. Nor are these all the passages in which Christ speaks about hell and its punishment. Just take a copy of *Matthew,* read it through for yourself,

and see how many more things Christ had to say about hell.

What Matthew says Christ taught about hell is substantiated by the other Evangelists. I refer you to *Mark* 3:28, 29; 9:42-48; 16:16; *Luke* 10:15; 12:8-10; 13:27, 28; 14:15-24; 16:19-31; *John* 3:26; 5:29; etc.

These passages ought to satisfy any mind. And they would satisfy any mind not biased against the Scriptures. So the sinner, when confronted with such an array of gospel evidence against him, smugly and defiantly says: "O, well, Christ said that while He was on earth when He didn't know any better, for He had emptied Himself of His Divinity."

We know this to be contrary to Scripture. But for the sake of argument, let us admit it for the time being, and then let us see whether Christ taught or revealed the existence of hell after He had returned to heaven. We turn to the Book of Revelation where we find what Christ taught and revealed from heaven. Is the teaching the same?

14:9-11. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark on his forehead, or on his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. *19:20.*

These were cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone. *20: 13-15.* And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them; and they were judged, every one, according to their works. And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

What have you to say now? Did the risen, exalted Christ, He, Who sat down at the right hand of glory in all the fullness of His divine nature, did He teach and reveal from heaven the reality of hell?

Nor are these all the passages in *Revelation* in which Christ as "very God of very God" speaks about hell. Take that marvelous book and read in addition to the words already quoted such passages as 9: 1, 2, 11; 11: 7; 16: 8; 20: 1-3; 21: 27. After you have read these ask yourself, if you dare, whether Christ in heaven taught what He taught as the God-man on earth.

But I know what some of you are thinking right now. You are silently arguing something like this,—"Yes, Jesus taught the doctrine of hell, but He Himself knew better and only fell in with current opinion to secure a hearing with the people of His day and to drive home the truth about sin separating from God." In other words, Christ knew the current opinion to be false, but yet taught it Himself for practical ends.

You poor, self-deluded creatures. You are like the man who sawed off the limb he was sitting on and then wondered why he hurt himself. You are like a man who builds a scaffold to reach some high place and then knocks the props from under while he is on top. Do

you not see your inconsistency? If Christ taught what He knew to be false, He lied. If He lied, He sinned. If He sinned, He is not God. If He is not God where is your hope of salvation? Answer me that if you can.

Worship a Saviour and a God, Who deliberately lies to you, if you want to. But, we, who believe in the sinlessness of Him, Who said: "I am the truth;"[3] believe every word that His Spirit has written for us in the Book of God, the Holy Bible. And so we accept the reality of hell.

What Christ taught on earth and from heaven His Apostles and His Church have always taught. Were it not so we would have the founders of His Church and His Church giving the lie direct to their Master and Teacher. This is inconceivable. Take the Bible, turn to the writings of Paul, or James, or Peter, or of whom you will, and you will soon find that one and all teach the reality of hell. Says Paul: "The Lord shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."[4] Says Peter: "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell."[5] Says James: "The tongue . . . . . is set on fire of hell."[6]

What then shall we say in the face of such evidence? There is only one answer to you, if you deny what God teaches,—"Woe unto you who pervert Scripture and teach the doctrines of men and of devils. Beware lest

[3] John 14:6. [4] II Thess. 1:8, 9. [5] II Pet. 2:4.
[6] Jas. 3:6.

Christ take you in the midst of your blasphemy, bind you with the chains of His righteous judgment, and cast you into the very hell you are seeking so eagerly to destroy."

The reality of hell having been established we can now examine God's Word to learn the nature of hell. Matthew relates these words of Christ,—"Cast ye the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. . . . . Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire."[7] Peter, under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, writes, "He also went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometimes were disobedient."[8] Here is a remarkable contrast of explaining words,—*fire, darkness, spirits*. This contrast, divinely given, tells us the nature of hell.

Hell is a place of darkness. "The children of the kingdom shall be cast out into the outer darkness."[9] "Then said the king to the servants, . . . cast him into the outer darkness."[10] "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness."[11] "These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; for whom the mist of darkness is reserved."[12]

Hell is a place of fire. I will not take the time to requote the Scripture to prove this. I wish to take a few minutes to discuss the nature of this fire. Is it a physical flame? a material fire, such as you and I see every day? I do not believe that Scripture wishes us to believe this. Hell's fire casts no light, for hell is dark. Hell's fire is intended for spiritual beings, not

[7] Matt. 25:30, 41. [8] I Pet. 3:19. [9] Matt. 8:12.
[10] Matt. 22:13. [11] II Pet. 2:4. [12] II Pet. 2:17.

for fleshly bodies, and material, physical fire could not harm or affect the spiritual.

What then is the nature of hell's fire? It is "mental and spiritual." Try to picture to yourself a being whose mind and soul are keyed to the highest degree of sensitiveness, a mind which fully sees and appreciates all the terribleness of its sins against God, a mind which sees and realizes most fully all the good it is now deprived of, and then imagine, if you can, what must be the awful, awful agony that mind feels. Picture not only a mind, a soul as well, a soul that dare not enter into the presence of its Maker, a soul that must endure forever the remorse of conscience, a soul that knows not the loving embrace of Christ's arms, a soul that can hear only a faint echo of the conversation of heaven, shut out, away from the Saviour, condemned to live with the devil's spawn! What the unfathomable and unutterable longing of that soul!

"Take an account of it from the lips of Jesus Christ himself; speaking of hell, he says, 'Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched,' This is the description he gives of it over and over again in Mark 9. By 'the *worm* that dieth not' is . . . . understood the gnawing of a guilty conscience, or that painful *remorse* which sinners will feel when they remember the sin and folly which brought them to hell. Thus . . . . Abraham speaks to Dives, and says, 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things.' . . . ."[13] "*Memory* will be a dreadful source of misery. 'Son, *remember*' . . . Poor sinners will remember the good instructions they received

[13] Luke 16:25.

from their parents, the faithful sermons they heard from their ministers, the solemn admonitions they had from their own consciences. They will remember with what contempt they treated serious piety; and in vain will they wish to be in the place of those they once despised. They will remember what Sabbaths they misspent, what mercies they abused, what judgments they slighted. It will be intolerable for them to reflect on their folly in parting with heaven for such wretched trifles. How despicably small will the pleasure of sin then appear to them. They will not be able to be themselves when they think for what they lost their God, their heaven, and their souls. And this will fill them with the most horrible rage and fury. They will be inwardly racked with envy, hatred, and resentment against God, against their tempters, against the companions of their sins, and especially against themselves." Indeed, they will suffer "the fire which is never quenched," the fire of a memory that will not be stilled, but which ever says: "See what you might have had, had you obeyed God."

Can we wonder that "When St. Paul reasoned 'of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix *trembled.*'"[14] Felix, the representative and the controller of the world's greatest power, trembling before little Paul, a Jew. This is God's warning to every unrepentant sinner who seeks to deny the reality of hell or argue that hell's punishment is a light thing. If you refuse to take God's own testimony then I say to you: "And thou . . . shalt be brought down to hell . . . it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the

[14] Acts 24:25.

day of judgment, than for thee."[15] "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."[16]

May God have mercy upon our sinful souls. Amen.

[15] Matt. 11:23, 24. [16] Gal. 6:7.

A NEW YEAR'S THOUGHT*

LUKE 13: 6-9. ¶ He spake also this parable: A certain *man* had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.

Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?

And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung *it*:

And if it bear fruit, *well*: and if not, *then* after that thou shalt cut it down.

There are times when God seems nearer to us than at others, when His Holy Word seems to strike home more deeply than usually, when we are more open to His gracious call than at other times. Such a time is our birthday. Having been brought to another mile-post in our earthly journey, that indeed is a hardened heart which can pass its birth anniversary without some thought of God. Such a time is Good Friday, when we look upon the Lamb of God, slain for our sins and see that heart burst with sorrow under the monstrous cruelty of rebellious nature. What shall we say of the soul that can look on this scene and pass this day by without one prayer to God for forgiveness? Another time is Easter, that

Day of wonder, day of gladness

when we see Christ triumph for us over sin, death, and the grave. Have you never greeted that day

With hymns of victory

for the joy you have felt as Christ drew nearer to you

*After the German of Ziethe in his *Immanuel,* Berlin, 1879.

in blessed remembrances of childhood days? Another such day is the last day of life. Never yet have I witnessed the death of a sinner without seeing his lips frame the words, "My God."

But Christ does not want you to wait until this last and doubtful chance to draw close to His saving power and taste of His life-giving love. And so He has graciously permitted you to come here this night, to the last service of the dying year, that you may hear of Him, and hearing of Him, see Him in faith, looking unto the Author and Finisher of salvation.

Hear, first, of the Divine possession in life. "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard." Have you stopped recently to think that you belong to God? Have you given any consideration to the wonderful truth that God has a claim on your life? If you have not, now is your opportunity.

Do you remember the words you learned when you first began to learn about God? Does not this sound familiar,—*I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.* You are God's because you are in His vineyard, planted there by His creative might. As long as you are living in God's vineyard you are bound to obey its laws and live its life, just as when a man goes from one country to another, even if he does not become a citizen of the new country, yet he is bound by its laws and customs and is owned by that country as long as he lives in it and is a receiver of its food, clothing, etc.

You are God's, moreover, not only by His creative might, but especially because of what He does for you. One of God's greatest saints once wrote these words as

the contrite sinner's recognition of the Divine possession of his life,—"I believe . . . that He has given and still preserves to me my body and soul, with all my limbs and senses, my reason and all the faculties of my mind, together with my raiment, food, home, and family, and all my property; that He daily provides me abundantly with all the necessaries of life, protects me from all danger, and preserves me and guards me against all evil; all which He does out of pure, paternal, and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me; for all which I am in duty bound to thank, praise, serve, and obey Him. This is most certainly true."†

Many of you cannot make this confession tonight because you have lost sight of the place God should have in your life. Many of you can make this confession tonight because, having turned from your sin, you have allowed God to find His place in your life again. And some of you have been able to make this confession with increasing surety and joy as the days of the now dying year have sped by because you have tried to love your Saviour and have the fullest realization in your life of God's creative and providential might. All of you can taste the personal peace which comes from a personal realization of the truth of this confession, taste it with increasing fullness every second of the year that now lies before you if you will only acknowledge and live the divine possession of your life.

The next lesson God would have you learn from this dying hour of the year is the Divine expectency in your life. "I come seeking fruit on this fig tree." These

† Luther, Small Catechism, 2d art. of Creed.

are the Master's words. They apply to you tonight as truly as they applied to the people of the Master's day when for three long years, both He and His Apostles went from one end of His vineyard to the other planting the seed of mercy and truth. During the past year He has come, time and again, seeking fruit in your life; has He found it?

When did He come seeking fruit? He came in the hour of your good fortune and happiness and sought to find the fruit of thankfulness and obedience. He came in the hour of your cross and tribulation and looked for the fruit of patience and hope. He came to you in His Word and Gospel and sought for the fruit of righteousness, that is so pleasing to Him. Where is then your fruit? Have you made your reckoning with Him? This very minute there come before you and testify against you every morning and evening in which you did not thank and call upon Him; every noonday in which you did not return thanks to Him for His gifts; every hour and day in which you have given no thought to Him. This very minute there come before you and testify against you every joy and satisfaction, every testing and trial that did not lead your heart to repentance and faith. This very minute there come before you and testify against you every proclamation of the truth, every gracious leading of God, that did not have any effect on you, which were wasted on you. Where is the fruit of the Spirit that He seeks daily in every life,—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control,[1]—fruit, which it is His will, that you should bring forth in His might

[1] Gal. 5: *22, 23.*

and grace? Have you made your reckoning and has it shown these good results, or have your days been spent in laying up "the works of the flesh, . . . which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like?"[2] Do you know what God says of these things? "I tell you beforehand, as I have also told you in time past, that they that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."[3] "I come seeking fruit on this fig tree." Has He found the good "fruit of the Spirit" or has He discovered only the decay of "the works of the flesh?" "I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none."

"Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it; and if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down." This is the conversation between the Master, the Lord of the vineyard, and His chief Gardner. "Cut down the unfruitful vine; why should it take up ground in which I can plant another vine that will bear fruit." This is the verdict of the Lord of the vineyard. It is the just verdict of cold justice. It is the righteous verdict of the Law, which knows no mercy and cannot be touched by love and grace to be lenient with the lawbreaker. The law of God is the law of fruitfulness. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away,"[4] this is the divine verdict in life. No fruit, no life; no life, "men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."[5] Perhaps many times in

[2] Gal. 5:19-21. [3] Gal. 5:21. [4] John 15:2. [5] John 15:6.

the past this divine verdict has been pronounced against you, condemning you, and yet you have been spared, given time to repent, to turn from your evil way, to the way of the Master. And all because there is operating in your life that which you have often refused to hear or heed, the law of divine love in Christ Jesus, the chief Gardner.

"Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it." The axe of God was many a time laid to the roots of your life-tree to cut it down for the fire, but again and again was it spared because of the chief Gardner's pleadings. Some One has prayed for you and interceded with His merciful Word before the judgment seat, and that One is your Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Perhaps you have wilfully despised and mocked Him and closed the door of your heart against Him. Yet He prayed for you. Perhaps you have made His temple a place of sin and shame. Yet He prayed for you. Perhaps you grieved and offended His Spirit, despised His Word and the preaching of His Gospel, denied and defamed His Holy Name. Yet He prayed for you. Perhaps the ever-increasing load of your sins and your sinning broke His loving heart and trampled His tender mercy and abundant grace under foot. Yet He still prayed for you; prayed, prayed, prayed,—"Father forgive."

And finally note the divine possibility in life. Says the chief Gardner, Jesus Christ: "I am the vine, ye are the branches; He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit."[6] And to this He adds: "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it

[6] John 15:5.

abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me . . . for apart from me ye can do nothing."[7] Every sin is the result of but one thing,—being away from Christ. So long as He cultivates and fertilizes the tree it cannot but bear fruit. As long as your life is hid in Him it is hid from the searching-out power of sin, for in Him is no sin, while His very righteousness drives sin away from His presence as the rising sun dispels the fog on the lowlands. A few years ago, I climbed to the top of one of the hills in the foothills of Vermont. It was a gloriously bright day with the sun shining down in full power. As I stood on that hill-top I saw from time to time shadows go racing across the face of the valley below, shadows now great and long-enduring, now small and fast-fleeting. Was it the sun that cast these shadows? That is the popular way of explaining it. But in reality the shadows were cast by the clouds that came in between the sun and the earth. So it is in your life. It is the nature of the Sun of righteousness to cast the light and life-giving rays onto and into your life. It is also the nature of sin to come between you and God's Sun that a shadow may be cast over your life. But this need not happen. If you will hear the call of God's Spirit, as it comes down to you from the towering hill of Calvary, floating on the stream of Christ's atoning blood, if you will hear this voice and let it lead you up the mountain, you will find at last that high point of Love to which no cloud can ascend for it is higher than the highest cloud the devil has ever sent forth from the swamp of hell. Will you hear now, recognizing the divine possession in your

[7] John 15:4, 5.

life, seeing the divine expectancy in your life, acknowledging the justice of the divine verdict against your life, will you? Will you, recognizing these facts, hear? Then can you know the divine possibility in your life.

"Life everlasting" He offers to thee—
Pardoning grace setting sin's captive free;
Love that is infinite, perfect, Divine—
Such is the portion which now may be thine.
Why not O, why not trust Jesus?

"Peace, passing knowledge," He giveth His own;
Joy that thou otherwise never hadst known,
Wilt thou not come, and, in coming be blest,
Proving the sweetness of perfect heart-rest?
Why not O, why not trust Jesus?

"Marvelous love," passing all human thought,
Love which alone could these wonders have wrought—
Such is the love that is waiting for thee,
Tenderly whispering, "Come unto Me."
Why not O, why not trust Jesus?

THE PATHWAY OF DEATH.*

Isa. 53:7-9. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth.

Death is always a solemn event. When we stand by the lifeless body of some friend or dear one and look upon that face set in the elusive calm of the last sleep; when we stand thus and think of the soul which has passed through the ante-chamber of the grave into the throne-room of God, there steals over our heart a silence-impelling awe.

In the rotunda of the Congressional Library at Washington the great clock is guarded and brooded over by a draped figure which grasps a giant scythe in its hand. This is a picture of the popular conception of death. But to the believer Death is not the grim reaper. To the follower of the Lamb, Death is majestic in its sureness, awe-inspiring in its dominion, but it is not the Great Conqueror.

The words of the Prophet give us a picture of death as it leads our Saviour along the pathway to His tomb

* Reprinted, with certain omissions, from the Author's *Fivefold Pathway.*

that we may contemplate Him as He goes and take to ourselves the great lessons concerning sin, patience, and discipleship, which this Pathway of Death brings to us.

I. The Lessons of Sin.

As we study the life of Christ and follow that wonderful Person from the manger-cradle to the rock-hewn grave we cannot but think it strange that so beautiful a character should have met so violent and horrible a death. And, perforce, we ask ourselves what this Jesus did to deserve so terrible a fate?

To answer this question we must turn to the documentary evidence and record of His death. In v. 9 we read, "he did no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth." This is only another way of saying what Pontius Pilate said to the raging mob as it howled, "Crucify him; crucify him." You recall the scene in "the hall of judgment." There stands Jesus, still wearing the white robes Herod had commanded his soldiers to throw about His shoulders. There He stands as Pilate looks at Him in amazement, wondering that so humble a Jew can arouse so mighty a tumult. There He stands as Pilate puts to Him the eternal question, "What is truth?" There He stands as Pilate goes "out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all." (Jn. 18, 38). Pilate was no fool. Rome selected no inexperienced men for her provincial governors. No, he was shrewd, keen, and crafty, and could see through the subterfuge of the priestly classes. So he spoke the GREAT EXONERATION, "I find in him no fault at all."

Out of the mouth of this pagan judge came the testi-

mony of Christ's sinlessness. Is not this a comfort for us? Just forget for the time being the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Look upon Him for a moment only as a man in whom we have trusted, as a man whom we have followed as *the* example of all that is good, noble, and true. Here, then, is our comfort, the ground of our continued faith in the man, Jesus, the basis of an enduring fellowship with the Carpenter of Nazareth, for we have not been deceived in Him, His claims to purity, and the power of purity still stand. His death is not ignoble, but glorious, the supreme vindication of character, for History has spoken the great exoneration, "I find in Him no fault at all."

Rejoice in the man, Jesus; let your faith be firm; let your following of Him continue, for "he had done no violence, neither was deceit in his mouth."

We must seek elsewhere, therefore, than in the character of Christ for the lessons of sin taught us by the Pathway of Death. The secret is revealed in the words, "my people." The sin of the people is the secret of the Pathway of Death.

This sin of the people is the sin of the will. Willingly His people bring Christ to the cross and its terrible death. The people, whom God had chosen before the foundation of the world to be a peculiar treasure, rise and slay the Servant He sends to lead them from the captivity of sin to the conquest of salvation. The unbeliever, the scoffer would call this "the irony of fate." But the pathway of Christ's death reveals to us who believe the true nature of the slaying of Jehovah's Servant. The sinfulness of the human will, this is the great lesson of the Pathway of Death. The man of

God speaks of the desire of man, which is evil from his youth up. (Gen. 8:21.) The prophets tell us of the stiffed-necked people, who will not hear of the mercies of God (Exod. 32:9; 2 Chron. 30:8, etc.) Christ, weeping over Jerusalem, depicts how often He would have gathered the children of God under His protecting, redeeming grace, but they "would not." (Mt. 23:37.)

Are your wills any more submissive to the will of God than were the wills of those children of God in Christ's day? Human nature has not changed; the human will is still the same. Only as our wills are brought to the Pathway of Death can they be changed. Let us, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, give our wills to Him that He may shape and mould them to His service, lest it be said of us that we have sent Christ anew along the pathway of death, and we be rejected.

But the Prophet does not stop here in his delineation of the lessons of sin disclosed by the Pathway of Death. We read not only "my people," but also, "for the transgressions of my people was he stricken." Christ was brought to the cross by the perverse will of His people, but back of this perverse will lay a perverse nature, expressing itself daily in transgressions. The water a city drinks can be no clearer than the streams of supply, unless it is put through an artificial process of purification. Neither can the human will be purer than the nature which lies behind it. Until that nature is purified by a process from without, the will must remain impure, and that nature must transgress.

We hear much today of "the will to believe," as if faith, which requires a pure heart, a regenerate heart, could spring from the uncleansed will of sinful man.

We hear much of the "divinity" coming to fulness in man by a process of natural development from within. But the pathway of Christ's death tells us clearly, "For the transgressions of my people was he stricken."

2. The Lessons of Patience.

The patience of Christ, as He trod the Pathway of Death, was threefold: (1) He was patient with His enemies; (2) He was patient with His friends; and (3) He was patient with His Father. With His enemies He showed Himself patient with the long-suffering of a just cause. He knew that He had come to help them to return to God. He realized the value of His purpose in becoming man, and so when His enemies came to seize Him and to drag Him to destruction He could say in all calmness, "Whom seek ye?" And when "They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus saith unto them, I am he." (Jn. 18:4, 5.) And then when He was nailed to the cross and subjected to its awful agony He could still say, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Lk. 23:34.) O, sublime patience of a just cause.

With His friends He showed the patience of the Master Teacher. How often His most intimate followers misunderstood Him and misconstrued His message and mission! How often their earthly, carnal interpretations of His teachings entirely hid the spiritual, heavenly truth! Yet always was He patient and gently led them back again and again as they wandered away in the vanity of their warped wisdom. Thus, when His bosom friend, Peter, thrice denied Him, He turned to him with no angry words of reproach; He only "looked

upon Peter . . . And Peter went out and wept bitterly." (Jn. 22:61, 62.) The patience of the Master Teacher destroying the pride of man!

And He was patient before His Father. When temptation came upon Him, He met it with the word of His Father. (Mt. 4:4, etc.) When in the garden of agony the sweat of blood rolled from off His brow, His only word was one of prayer. (Mt. 26:36-46.) And on the cross He summoned none of His myriads of angels to rescue Him, but patiently endured its agony, because He knew it was His Father's will so to save the world.

Like Christ, our great pattern, we have our enemies, our well-meaning friends, and our Father to deal with. As Christ has set us the example, our motto too must be PATIENCE. Patience with our enemies that we may win them by our example to a confidence in the sincerity of our profession and through this confidence to an examination of the faith we profess, which will surely lead the way to Christ Jesus. Patience with our friends that our friendship may grow deeper and deeper day by day, and with this increase in friendship there will come a proportionate increase in our ability to work together for Christ and His kingdom as we present a solid front to the enemy and their leader, Satan. Patience with our Father that we may hear the still, small voice of conscience directing, encouraging, and strengthening us in our daily tasks; patience with our Father when He sends the bitter medicine of afflictions upon us to cure our soul's sickness of sin; patience with the Father in our success lest we forget Him and fall into sin; yea, patience in every walk of life to our growth

in grace, our strengthening in faith, our increase in fellowship with Him.

In closing our present study, let us glance for a brief survey at

3. The Lessons of Discipleship,

our walking with Christ along the Pathway of Death brings to us. The Prophet says that Christ trod this pathway to secure for us deliverance from sin and death. Everywhere, Scripture either looks forward to or backward upon "the Cross of Christ." The Old Testament prophets with each new revelation saw more clearly the coming of the Cross. The New Testament writers look back to it for their courage and power. St. Paul boasted that he would know nothing "save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." (I Cor. 2:2.)

In the Cross of Christ I Glory.

How many of us, when we sing this hymn, really stop to think of the terrific import of these words? They point backward to the Pathway of Death and indicate the nature of our discipleship.

To glory in the Cross means first, to appropriate the holiness of Him who hung upon it. We have done so, you say. But, O! what a weak faith ours must be if it is to be measured by the degree of the purity and holiness so many of us manifest in our daily life.

To glory in the Cross means, further, that we must appropriate our share of the ignominy of Christ. If we glory in the Cross we must bear the scorn and ridicule of the world. Does some one say, "There is no scorn or ridicule?" We reply, "Dear friend, there is something the matter with your glorying." No one can really

glory in the Cross and have the good will of the unbeliever. Vinegar cannot mix with milk without turning it sour. Neither can we glory in the Cross and fail to make enemies or retain the friendship of the forces of Satan, for every Christian bears about him a rebuke for and judgment against the world, the flesh, and the devil. Every Christian is "manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ" and "read of all men." (II Cor. 3:2, 3.)

To glory in the Cross of Christ means lastly, to appropriate Christ's consecration of the will to God. The one object of our life should be consecration; i.e., devoted, devout, loving, and self-sacrificing service for the Master. James tells us, "faith without works is dead." (Jas. 2:20.) This is only another way of saying that to glory in the Cross without personal consecration is but vain-glory. The wheels of the engine cannot turn to draw the train unless they are connected with the piston and the boiler. Each of us has a train of service to draw. The wheels of our glorying must be connected with the piston of consecration and the boiler of God's Word if our task is to be accomplished, our mission in life fulfilled.

SPIRITUAL SUCCESS.

LUKE 8:8, 15. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit a hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep *it,* and bring forth fruit with patience.

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."[1] "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."[2] These are two very precious jewels from God's heavenly treasure, the Bible. Many have heard these promises, many have accepted them, many have come to treasure them as beyond all price. Yet, how few really have the perfect realization of these two promises in their lives. How few know the fullness of joy which is in the presence of God and those true delights of the saved that are at the right hand of the Most High.

The Gospel is preached and taught to many; the salvation of God, through His Son Jesus Christ, is offered to many; the way of life is pointed out to many; the Bread of heaven is fed to many. Yet, "many be called, but few chosen."[3]

Where does the fault lie? Who is to blame? Surely, it cannot be laid at the door of the Father in heaven. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only be-

[1] Isa. 1:18. [2] Luke 19:10. [3] Matt. 20:16.

gotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."[4] "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?"[5] It cannot be laid at the door of Christ, for, Christ Himself said: "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."[6] It cannot be laid at the door of the Bible, for, all that the world knows about salvation from sin, the hope of forgiveness, and the new life it has learned from the Bible, where alone it can be found. The Bible is "the word of God." It cannot, therefore, lead astray or deceive.

No, we must seek elsewhere, for the things of God and God cannot be the source of failure. God and His things are the highway to spiritual success. He and His love gifts are for the saving and the healing of every soul. But every soul must meet the divinely given requirements.

I take it that every one of us here present wants to succeed in God's sense of this word. Each of us wants to be on God's side and stand for God's cause. Each of us wants every one of the two thousand odd promises of God's Word to be richly realized in this life. So I want you to consider God's rule for spiritual success.

"And others fell upon good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. . . . But that on the good ground are they, who in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." Here is the Divine promise of spiritual success and the Divine condition for spiritual success.

[4] John 3:16. [5] Rom. 8:32. [6] John 6:37.

To receive the divinely appointed harvest there must be "an honest and good heart" in which to plant the good seed, which is the word of God.

A good and honest heart. There were two men, chosen by Christ Himself, to be members of His little group of the Twelve. Both were sinners, both committed the same great sin against their Friend and Master. Of these, one was called "the son of perdition,"[7] while the other was commanded to feed the lambs and the sheep of Christ. Both repented of their sin, yet one was lost and the other saved. One gained spiritual success, the other was a spiritual failure. It was the same word they heard day after day from the same lips and out of the same loving heart of the same Jesus. Yet He cursed one and forgave the other. Tragedy and death, joy and life, but one little thing turns the balance one way or the other. That one little thing is the heart you carry in your breast. This puts you in the Judas or in the Peter class, and, into one or the other you must go, for there are no others.

A good and honest heart, this is the Peter rock-bottom of spiritual success. An honest heart is a heart which recognizes its own sinfulness and cries out in penitence for the blood of the Lamb of God to cleanse it from all sin. An honest heart is one which hides behind the pillar of Christ in the temple of God and, not lifting up so much as the eyes to heaven, smites upon the breast, and cries out to the hidden God, "God be merciful to me a sinner."[8] An honest heart is one which says with Peter, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord."[9] Not until you recognize and

[7] John 17:12. [8] Luke 18:13. [9] Luke 5:8.

confess your sins against God can you expect to be spiritually successful. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."[10] "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin."[11]

A good heart. A good heart is a prayerful heart. Many are the promises of blessing which God has given to those who pray. "If my people, that are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and heal their land."[12] Notice how prayer is the central point of this precious promise. First comes the humbling process, lastly comes the turning process, and between lies the prayer process, giving unity and surety to the entire promised blessing. "I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."[13] Notice again how prayer, seeking the Lord, is the center around which this wonderful promise turns. "Thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." Who wants God to think hard things about one's soul? What every soul seeks is peace, a good end in the sight of God. These desired gifts of the Father are yours for the asking, they are the

[10] I John 1:9. [11] Ps. 32:5. [12] II Chron. 7:14.
[13] Jer. 29:11-13.

fruits of prayer. Simon, the sorcerer, tried to bribe Peter to give him the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit. Did he get this power? "Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter; for thy heart is not right with God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity."[14] Wickedness and iniquity, the twin slave masters of the sinning soul. How get free? Repent? Yes, by all means, for without repentance, there is no forgiveness. Pray? Yes, for prayer is the power that lifts the repentance of the soul to the throne of grace. Pray the Lord for forgiveness. So Simon said to Peter: "Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come to pass."[15] "Pray without ceasing,"[16] is the Apostle's direction. In his closing words, to the faithful, who were scattered abroad, in the space of five short sentences, he directs these afflicted, persecuted souls to pray, and he sums up his whole teaching and admonition in these words, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."[17] What does Christ say of prayer's power to bring spiritual success? "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."[18] Prayer bridges the fearful, sullen stream, and helps one to cross the swollen flood to the shore of safety and peace.

A good heart. A good heart is not only a prayerful

[14] Acts 8:20-23. [15] Acts 8:24. [16] I Thess. 5:17.
[17] Jas. 5:16. [18] Matt. 26:41.

heart. A good heart is also a heart filled with the spirit of worship. When God freed His children from slavery and led them out of the land of bondage into the land flowing with milk and honey, out of the land of lashing into the land of love, the first thing He did was to take one of the twelve tribes and set it aside as the religious leader of the people. In the land of slavery, it was the overwhelming need of worship that first awakened the children of God to a realization of their terrible condition. As soon as they passed the boundaries of the land of slavery, God gave them the priest and the tabernacle, the leader and the place of worship. Thus in the very beginning of their existence God emphasized the important place of worship in their life.

As the children of Israel journeyed toward the promised land, one day, their leader, Moses, was called up on the mountain to receive from the hands of God a new blessing for His people. While Moses was on the mountain with God, the people proved false to the call to worship God and began to turn to idols. Immediately God sent Moses back to them. When this great man of God came down into the camp, his "anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and break them beneath the mount. And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strewed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it. . . . And the Lord plagued the people, because they had made the calf, . . ."[19]

God was preparing a precious gift for His people.

[19] Exod. 32: 19, 20, 35.

While He was in the very act of this merciful and gracious work, His people broke His commands and went after strange gods. God, seeing their sin, sends His servant to them. As Moses goes back he carries with him the gift. As soon as this gift enters the place of sin, it is broken. As it breaks, God's mercy and grace are insulted by the presumptuous power of sin, and He sends forth His punishment, first, the thing they worshipped they must swallow, and then comes the plague.

So it is in every event of life. God has many rich blessings in store for His people. But alas they will turn to worship the gods of this world, they will turn to the seeming golden calf, which is in reality hidden death, for, the moment a soul betrays its God, and turns from worshipping Him, to the service of sin, the gift of God is broken, the wrath of God is kindled, the soul is made to eat its own dish of rebellion, and then the plague of punishment goes out from God.

"But the Lord, . . . him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye sacrifice."[20] "He is thy Lord; and worship thou him."[21] "Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."[22] "If any man be a worshiper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth."[23]

Tell me whom you worship and I will tell you whose servant you are. If you are worshipping the devil, you are serving the devil, and if you are serving the devil, you are not serving God, and so you must be worship-

[20] II Kings 17:36. [21] Ps. 45:11. [22] Matt. 4:10.
[23] John 9:31.

ing the devil. Worship and service, service and worship, are not possible of separation. Where one is, the other inevitably follows. Watch where your heart is, watch where you are serving and worshiping.

Some have tried all these things, have turned a repentant, prayerful, and worshipful heart to God, and yet have lost the promised blessing. They have lost it because they did not have patience and failed to hold fast to God.

There was a man, whose name was, "the thief," or, "the supplanter." One evening he was journeying along the road when he was stopped by a man who began to wrestle with him. All night long the battle raged. With the coming of morning the man said: "Let me go, for the day breaketh."[24] But the thief answered: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me."[25] Then the unknown man asked the thief: "What is thy name?"[26] To which he received the reply: "The thief." Then said the unknown man to him: "Thy name shall be called no more the thief, but prince of God: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."[27]

Just think of it! Overnight to have one's name changed from "the thief" to "the prince of God." A marvelously wonderful transformation made possible because, when the thief had in his grasp the power of God, he did not let it go, but put up a patient, persistent fight for the blessing he knew God alone could give him,—a new name, which is a new heart.

When God calls you to repentance and to faithful

[24] Gen. 32:26. [25] Gen. 32:26. [26] Gen. 32:27.
[27] Gen. 32:28.

prayer and worship, do not turn from His call until you compel Him to bless you. The face of God is before you now as it was before Jacob that early morning hour; it is before you for a blessing or a curse. You and you alone can decide the issue. Hold Him fast, patiently, persistently, prayerfully; in worship and repentance cry the compelling cry, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me," and as sure as God is God, you will feel the life-giving streams gush forth from the throne of grace to wash you and make you clean and new in body, heart, and soul.

THE PATHWAY OF THE ACCOMPLISHED MISSION.*

Isa. 53 : 10-12. ¶Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him: he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong: because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Jesus Christ, while on earth, walked the way of service along five great paths, the path of Wise Dealing, the path of Rejection, the path of Suffering, the path of Death, and the path of the Accomplished Mission. Which of these is the greatest is perhaps hard to say. Take but one away and you destroy the meaning of the entire life and sacrifice of the Master. Change one and you change all. Destroy one and you destroy all. Yet, the one which seems to have the most intimate and practical bearing upon our present life is the last of Christ's paths, the pathway of the Accomplished Mission. Along this way He now travels, travels that you and I and all sinners may have a personal realization of His last words, spoken from the Cross,—It is finished (John 19 : 30.)

* Reprinted, with certain omissions and additions, from the Author's *The Fivefold Pathway.*

The keynote of this last journey of Christ is "Reward for Faithful Service." We may ask ourselves therefore, "First, Why was this journey-service *faithful;* and secondly, how was this faithful journey-service *rewarded?*"

1. Why Was This Journey-Service "Faithful?"

In the opening words of our text we read, "It pleased the Lord to bruise him." Here is the first clue for the term *Faithful.* The journey-service of Christ is according to the *pleasure* of God. It pleased God to bruise Him. Scripture very plainly indicates, that

> Before the hills in order stood,
> Or earth received her frame,

God had perfected the way of salvation. The first indication mankind had of this way was after his fall when God said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Gen. 3:15.) This was the first proclamation of the pleasure of God, and in it He manifested not only His own will, but bound His Servant, Jesus Christ, to a like public acknowledgment of His purpose to fulfill the will of the Father.

How Christ fulfilled this will is well known. Of His promise He says, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Lk. 2:49.) Again, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." (Jn. 18:37.) Again, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." (Jn. 10:11.)

"The Son of man came . . . to give his life a ransom for many." (Mt. 20:28.) "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." (Jn. 12:32.) So Christ, while on earth, continually expressed and lived according to the pleasure of God.

The Apostles, too, bear witness of Christ's walking according to the pleasure of God. Paul tells us how He "reconciled" the sinner with God through "one body by the cross." (Eph. 2:16.) In Rom. 5:8 he writes, "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us," while in Gal. 3:13 he says, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Peter writes as follows, I Pet. 3:18,—"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh." The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews calls our attention repeatedly to the fact that "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." (9:28.) And John the beloved Disciple bids his spiritual children remember that "Jesus Christ the righteous . . . is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (I Jn. 2:2.)

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, through the power of inspiration expressed in the writings of the holy Apostles, unite in proclaiming, accepting, and fulfilling the pleasure of God. "It pleased the Lord to bruise him." Christ died, the righteous for the unrighteous. So He submitted to the good pleasure of His Father, and received in return the commendation of God, FAITHFUL.

God has for each of us a plan of life even as He

had for His Son. God desires that we should follow this plan: and follow it we must either positively or negatively; negatively, when we reject Him and scorn His pleasure to follow ways of our own devising; positively, when we permit the Holy Spirit to guide us to a successful accomplishment of God's plan for us. Christ's motto was, "It pleased the Lord." "It pleased the Lord" must be our motto since we seek the commendation, *Faithful,* for our journey-service.

And Christ's journey is called "Faithful" because of His knowledge. Christ knew Himself. He knew His own powers and His own privileges. He knew just how far He might trust these, and when to abandon them and throw Himself on the power of God. He knew that He might presume as God's Son, but He never forgot that He had "humbled himself and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. 2:8.)

He knew mankind also. "Jesus . . . knew all men. And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man." (Jn. 2:24, 25.) He knew the very secret of their strength and their weakness. He knew His enemies as such and treated them accordingly. He knew who were His friends and faithful followers and walked with them as they deserved.

And He knew His God. Christ often said, "I and my Father are one." (John 10:30.) By this He meant not only that with the Father He was truly Divine while on earth, but that He also had perfect knowledge of God's will concerning Himself. He knew God's good pleasure. And because He knew God and His pleasure, He could carry out God's will, and His knowledge

spelled itself out in a service, which was called FAITHFUL.

In our own life three things are necessary for the successful accomplishment of any given task. We must know ourselves, the nature of our task, and the abilities of the men who work with and against us. That teacher cannot be faithful, who, when fit only for the kindergarten, tries to instruct a university class. No business man can be faithful unless he knows his own ability, the powers and limitations of his employees and competitors, and the nature of the business he conducts. A cobbler can never build a bridge, nor a cart-driver construct a tunnel through the Alps.

Knowledge of one's self, of one's fellowmen, and of one's plan in life are indispensible if one's service is to be called FAITHFUL. We must know God's good pleasure concerning ourselves, we must realize our own powers and limitations, we must know the nature of those we deal with if we are to serve God properly.

This essential knowledge comes to us by three ways (1) the voice of nature, which at the best gives but a mediocre knowledge; (2) the voice of conscience, which is true and reliable only in proportion to its purity; and (3) the voice of revelation, which alone is perfect and infallable. It is only through God's revelation in Holy Scripture that all the elements of a perfect working knowledge, proportionate to the scope of our life's plan, can be ours.

Some may and do say that God's Word is obscure, and that they cannot learn the way of life from it. The reason for this is very simple; they seek not to know God and His good pleasure; they seek to fathom the

mysteries it has seemed good to God to veil from us, Scripture tells, "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God." (Deut. 29:29.) And further, "If any man will do his will, he shall know the doctrine." (Jn. 7:17.) Leave then the hidden things to God, He will take care of them better than any of us can. Let the Holy Spirit work in you "the will of his will," and it shall not be long before that knowledge, so requisite for service, will be given you, while the plan of your life will be unfolded before you, here a little, there a little, day by day, until at last you shall see the whole panorama of the noble and glorious service God has planned for you.

2. How Was the Faithful Service-Journey Rewarded?

In v. 11 we read, "He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." As we contemplate the character of Christ we cannot but notice and marvel at His perfect peace with Himself. Nowhere can we find a single ripple of discontent, of dissatisfaction, of self-reproach. Every picture we can frame of Him shows Him to us a man of "unruffled calmness and perfect self-possession," a man absolutely at one with Himself. This calm, this self-possession, this peace were the direct result of His faithful service. He dealt wisely, served faithfully, and He was given to know peace, He was satisfied.

In our lives this peace of Christ can be made evident too. Who has not felt that gentle calm of content which follows a good deed done for Christ, that warm glow of satisfaction which follows a cup of cold water offered

some thirsty wayfarer, the saying of a kind word of comfort and encouragement to some downcast heart? This calm, this warm glow of satisfaction are but gleams of that peace and poise which are God's rewards for faithful service. And is not this reward worth striving for?

Again we read, "He shall see his seed." Christ's service was promised not only a personal reward but a harvest as well. How glorious has been the harvest coming from Christ's faithful service! Who can number the souls redeemed from the power of darkness; who can count the fallen raised to new manhood and womanhood; who can tell the hearts comforted, cheered, encouraged; and all by "the travail of his soul?" Remove this "his seed" and you make history meaningless, knowledge useless, and leave the world tottering on the brink of the abyss of ruin and despair. Verily, He has seen the increase of His seed sown in His faithful service.

We may not be able to see such a glorious harvest come from the service seeds we sow. But the harvest will surely come, for so God hath promised. This revealing of our seed's increase may be delayed, but it cannot be destroyed. We may often think our services are going unrewarded because we measure God's eternal promise by our fleeting, transient time; but God never forgets. Monica wept and prayed for her son, Augustine, while his companions mocked her and seemed to stop the ears of God; but, as Augustine himself says, "'Thou sentest thine hand from above, and drewest my soul out of that profound darkness." And Monica saw her tears of love and faith become seeds for the harvest

of service in that great man of God, *Saint* Augustine. The old Scotch minister's labors seemed to have been in vain, for he could point to but one convert, and he only a boy of twelve. But this boy lived to lay at the feet of Christ and before the throne of England an imperial domain. That boy was Robert Moffat, pioneer in South African mission work, and translator of the Bible into Chuana. The Scotch divine has seen his seed's harvest.

But the prophet goes on, "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong." This prophecy was fulfilled in part when Christ broke the enclosing gates of death; when He triumphantly entered hell and liberated the captive saints of the Old Testament promise; when He ascended into heaven and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. It is being fulfilled today with the rescue of every soul from the trinity of evil, the world, the flesh, and the devil. And when at the judgment of the great white throne every knee shall bow to Christ and every tongue shall confess His holy name, then shall Christ's reward of conquest be fully bestowed.

To seek "a portion with the great," to stand high among men is a noble aspiration if it be for the glory of God. But if this desire has its origin in a selfish motive it ceases to be a virtue and becomes a vice. This is the secret why so many great men have passed away into oblivion. Where do we find today the names of men like Alaric, who laid all Europe at his feet; or Genghis Khan, who to conquer the Tartars slew six millions of them? To be great in this way is a curse, not a blessing. David realized this when he said, "I had rather

be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." (Ps. 84:10.) Solomon felt the same danger when he prayed God not to give him "riches . . . lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord?" (Prov. 30:8, 9.)

Indeed, why should we seek "a portion with the great" among men when *God* has promised us a reward for faithful service? The ascended Christ, the King of glory, the Lord of hosts, says, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown." (Rev. 2:10.) What is this crown? It is "a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (I Pet. 5:4) even "the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (Jas. 1:12.) Our reward is, indeed, a portion with the great, but with the *truly* great, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with Peter, James, and John, with Paul, Silas, and Barnabas. How such meditations should make all earthly power and position melt away as the snow on the sun-kissed hills and plains.

We march, we march to victory,
With the Cross of the Lord before us,
With His loving Eye looking down from the sky,
And His holy Arm spread o'er us.

We come in the might of the Lord of Light,
In joyous train to meet Him;
And we put to flight the armies of night,
That the sons of the Day may greet Him.

Our Sword is the Spirit of God on high,
Our helmet His salvation;
And our banner the Cross of Calvary,
And our watchword: THE INCARNATION.

We tread in the might of the Lord of Hosts,
And fear not man nor devil;
For our Captain Himself guards well our coasts,
To defend His Church from evil.

He marches in front of His banner unfurled,
Which He raised that His own might find Him;
And the holy Church through all the world
Falls in rank and marches behind Him.

Then onward we march, our arms to prove,
With the Banner of Christ before us,
With His Eye of love looking down from above,
And His holy Arm spread o'er us. *Amen.*

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